

The Homilist.



Vol. II. Third Series.

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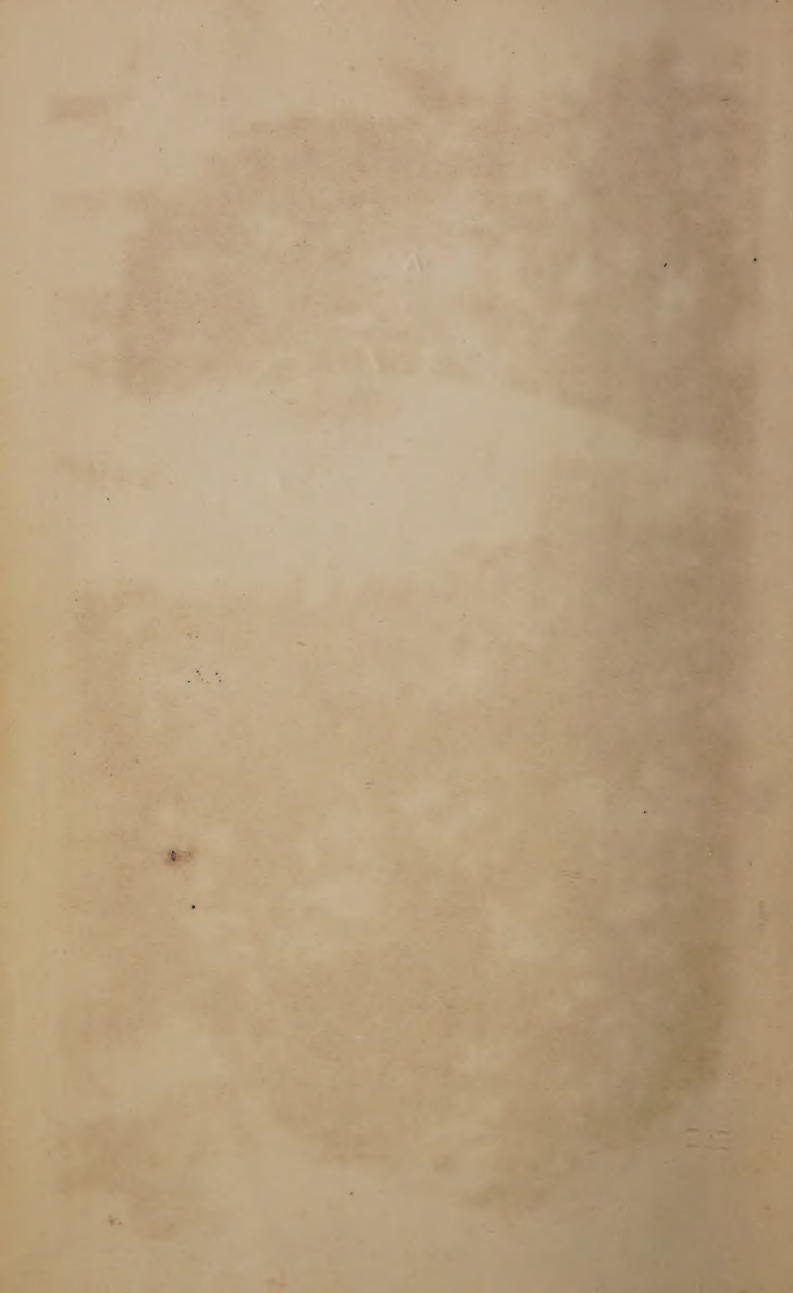
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THE HOMILIST.

CONDUCTED BY

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.,

AUTHOR OF THE "BIBLICAL LITURGY," "CRISIS OF BEING," "CORE OF CREEDS," "PROGRESS OF BEING," "RESURRECTIONS," &c., &c.

VOL. II. THIRD SERIES.

VOLUME XIII. FROM COMMENTMENT.

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THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



"THE LETTER KILLETH BUT THE SPIRIT GIVETH LIFE."—*Paul.*

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PREFACE.

THIS Volume is the second of the *Third Series* of the work. The only difference between this and the preceding series, consists in its enlarged size and half-yearly issue. The friends of the "Homilist" will be glad to know that although this is the thirteenth volume, the work was never in greater demand than at present.

As the old key-note will still rule the melodies of the "Homilist," and no new specific description is requisite, the twelve-years-old preface may be again transcribed.

"First: The book *has no finish*. The Editor has not only not the time to give an artistic finish to his productions, but not even the *design*. Their incompleteness is *intentional*. He has drawn some marble slabs together, and hewn them roughly, but has left other hands to delineate minute features, and so polish them into beauty. He has dug up from the Biblical mine some precious ore, smelted a little, but left all the smithing to others. He has presented 'germs,' which, if sown in good soil, under a free air and an open sky, will produce fruit that may draw many famishing spirits into the vineyard of the Church.

"Secondly: The book *has no denominationalism*. It has no special reference to '*our* body,' or '*to our* church.' As denominational strength is not necessarily *soul* strength, nor denominational religion necessarily the religion of humanity, it is the aim of the 'Homilist' to minister that which universal man requires. It is for man as a citizen of the universe, and not for him as the limb of a sect.

"Thirdly: The book *has no polemical Theology*. The Editor—holding, as he does, with a tenacious grasp, the *cardinal* doctrines which

constitute what is called the 'orthodox creed'—has, nevertheless, the deep and ever-deepening conviction, first, that such creed is but a very small portion of the truth that God has revealed, or that man requires; and that no theological system can fully represent all the contents and suggestions of the great book of God; and, secondly, that systematic theology is but means to an end. *Spiritual morality is that end.* Consequently, to the *heart and life* every Biblical thought and idea should be directed. Your systems of divinity the author will not disparage; but his impression is, that they can no more answer the purpose of the Gospel, than *pneumatics* can answer the purpose of the atmosphere. In the case of Christianity, as well as the air, the world can live without its scientific truths; but it must have the free flowings of their vital elements. Coleridge has well said, 'Too soon did the doctors of the Church forget that the heart—the moral nature—was the beginning and the end, and that truth, knowledge, and insight were comprehended in its expansion.'

"The Editor would record his grateful acknowledgments to those free spirits of all churches, who have so earnestly rallied round him, to the many who have encouraged him by their letters, and to those, especially, who have aided him by their valuable contributions. May the 'last day' prove that the help rendered has been worthily bestowed; and that the 'Homilist' did something towards the spiritual education of humanity, in its endeavors to bring the Bible, through the instrumentality of the pulpit, into a more immediate and practical contact with the every-day life of man!"

DAVID THOMAS.

Loughborough Park,
Brixton.

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"THE LETTER KILLETH BUT THE SPIRIT GIVETH LIFE."—*Paul.*

A HOMILY

ON

Ahasuerus' Sleepless Night—The Divine Government.*

"On that night could not the king sleep, and he commanded to bring the book of records of the chronicles; and they were read before the king. And it was found written, that Mordecai had told of Bigthani and Teresh, two of the king's chamberlains, the keepers of the door, who sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus. And the king said, What honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this? Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, There is nothing done for him."—*Esther vi. 1—3.*

BIBLICAL critics are by no means agreed as to the character of this book. Some regard it as being destitute of any historical basis; they view it as fiction, as a mere historical romance, a kind of tragedy, in which the action is carried on by imaginary characters, a tale constructed for the purpose of

* Memorable Nights of the Bible, No. IV.

illustrating, as the parables of Christ do, certain great truths. Others maintain that it is a narrative of actual occurrences, a real history ; that the characters mentioned actually lived and performed the various actions recorded. The grand reason which these assign for their belief, is, that the Jewish people do now celebrate, and have ever since celebrated, a festival, called the feast of Purim, designed to perpetuate the memory of the events which the book records. It is said, that as we regard the existence of the passover as establishing the historical authority of the book in which its origin is recorded ; and the Lord's supper, as establishing the historical truth of the evangelical narrative ; for the same reason we are bound to regard the feast of Purim, now celebrated by the Jew, as establishing the historic reality of this book. There are some, however, who, whilst holding to its historical reality, doubt, and even deny its canonicity. A book may be a true history, and yet not inspired, not entitled to a place in the Holy Word. The fact that the Jews have always regarded it as one of their sacred books, and that the great body of Christians in all ages have done the same, is generally regarded as sufficient to establish its claim to a place in the inspired canon. It is certainly strange that the book contains no reference to a God, to moral obligation, or to the immortality of the soul. Nor does it record a single character that seems influenced by the principles of truth and virtue. Notwithstanding all this, however, the book is big with meaning, it is pregnant with suggestions touching the Divine government of the world.

Before we proceed to develop a few of these lessons, it will be well for us to attend to two or three questions :—

First : *Who is the sleepless monarch on this night ?* He is called in the book, Ahasuerus ; the official name for the ruler of Persia, as Pharaoh for Egypt, and Caesar for Rome. Some think that this monarch was the Xerxes of profane history, the wild and ruthless despot who scourged the ocean and beheaded his engineers, because its billows destroyed the bridge of the Hellespont. From the book we learn that his

life was one of the most extravagant in sensuality; he made the wealth and beauty of his kingdom minister to his degraded appetites; his soul, his conscience, his moral manhood were submerged in the stream of animal gratification. He was an imperial brute, and he revelled in the grossest carnalities; a Henry the Eighth of the old Oriental World. We learn, also, that his dominion was very extensive, that he reigned "from India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces." He was in his day, politically, the Cæsar of his age; the temporal destinies of the world were in his hand; even Jerusalem was bound to yield to his rule. Strange, that Providence should allow such power to such a man. Yet it has ever done so. Incarnate devils have, from the commencement, too often occupied human thrones. Earth's diadems not unfrequently encircle the brows of demons. We learn also that his mere will was law. What his foul nature resolved, even in his harem, would pass as a law to control the destinies of millions. He was an absolute autocrat. Such was the man who could not sleep this night. "He," says Matthew Henry, "that commanded one hundred and twenty-seven provinces, could not command one hour's sleep."

Secondly: *What was the book he read that night?* It is here called "the book of records of the chronicles." "We know," says Kitto, "of no nation which took so much pains as the Persians, to preserve the memory of their exploits by written documents." All that the king did or said was deemed worthy of record. The monarch was generally surrounded by scribes, whose duty it was to take note of his words and actions. They were rarely absent from him, and always attended him when he appeared in public. Now it was a book containing such records, that he had read to him in the sleepless hours of this night. It was not a book of philosophic thought, or lofty poetry, or moral instruction, but a book recording his *own* sayings and deeds. Vain man! he was his own God. There was nothing greater in the universe to him than himself. He was a type of that large class of self-worshippers that abound in every age and clime.

Thirdly: *What was the discovery he made that night?* He found there that two of the Chamberlains had plotted his destruction, and that Mordecai, a Jew, had exposed and thwarted their plot. Mordecai was a Hebrew, now resident in Susa, the capital of the Persian empire, an uncle to Esther, who was now one of the wives of the despot. He sustained some office in the court, and seems to have been in daily attendance. He appears to have been a man of some independency of mind, for he refused to manifest the customary signs of homage to Haman, who was at that time the king's favorite. This Haman, having had his vanity thus wounded, had, before this night, procured from the king a decree not only for Mordecai's destruction, but for the destruction of all the Jews. A copy of the decree was sent, with the king's seal, to all the provinces, requiring all his ministers in all his provinces "to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to take the spoil of them for a prey." (Esther iii. 13.) So in the book the king now read, he found that this Mordecai whom he had, with the millions of his race, doomed to death, had been the instrument of his own deliverance from destruction.

Fourthly: *What was the result of the discovery that night?* Two things, at least, came out from the king's sleeplessness this night. (1) The preservation and exaltation of Mordecai. On the discovery, Haman, the king's favorite, is at once summoned to his presence. He had just entered the precincts of the court for the very purpose of speaking to the king about hanging Mordecai on the gallows. He had arranged everything for the execution of the man who had so often wounded his vanity at the king's gate, and in an hour or two he expected that his wrath would be avenged. But the king requires him for something else. He puts the question to him, "What shall be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honor?" Haman takes it for granted that *he* is the man whom the king is going to honor, and

forthwith propounds in his answer his empty notions of honor. "Let the royal apparel be brought," &c. Haman, in his idea of honor, is the type of those millions, who, in every age, consider dignity to consist in grand and gilded externalisms. The honor, however, which he sought and expected, was not for him, but for the very man on whose destruction he was bent. Mordecai had this honor, and Haman had the mortification of being compelled to render it. Another thing that came out of this sleepless night was—(2) The frustration of enormous wickedness, and the salvation of the whole Jewish people. The infernal plot of Haman is destroyed, he himself is to be hanged, and his coadjutors meet with speedy vengeance. The royal decree for the destruction of all the Jews is revoked.

Now, had the king slept that night, or had he been sleepless and not called for the "Book of the Chronicles," or had he called for the book of the chronicles, and not had his attention fastened upon the particular case of Mordecai—in any of these cases, what would have been the result? Why this; that Haman's fiendish purposes would have been realized; and the whole Jewish race, whence the Messiah was to come, would have been destroyed. Truly, this was a *memorable night*.

From this subject we may learn a few lessons in connection with God's government of the world.

I. HE OFTEN WORKS OUT HIS PURPOSE THROUGH THE FREE WORKINGS OF DEPRAVED MINDS, UNCONSCIOUS OF HIS INFLUENCE. God's purpose at this time, notwithstanding the efforts of Haman and his coadjutors, and the decree which the king had sent by fleet couriers to every province, was the preservation of the Jewish people. For from them, the Messiah, in distant ages, was to come. But how was this purpose brought about? He could have done it by a miracle. He could have done it by sweeping, with a breath of His mouth, from the earth, every man who had evil intent against the children of Abraham. But He acted not thus. He takes

away sleep from the eyes of an ungodly monarch. In the sleepless hour, He creates a desire in his mind for the perusal of a certain document. He directs his attention to a certain fact in that document, and thus the end is gained. All the while the king is unconscious of His influence. He often works thus. Jacob got from his blind and dying father, by a double falsehood, the blessing which Heaven had decreed. He does not know, that, even in his base perfidiousness, the plans of the Divine government are being carried towards their consummation. The brethren of Joseph, prompted by evil passions, sell him to the Ishmaelites, and he is borne a slave into Egypt. They are free in their wicked counsels and deed; but, unconsciously to themselves, all the while they are carrying out the purposes of Heaven. "It was not you that sent me hither, but God." And again, "As for you," said he, "ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." (Gen. i. 20.) The Assyrian army invades Judea, strikes terror into the heart of the nation; rapine, blood, and death following every step in its ruthless march. They are free in all; Sennacherib and his mighty battalions are free, and as wicked as they are free; and yet, in their iniquitous invasion, they were bearing on the Eternal decrees of a government of which they were unconscious, and against which their every act was a rebellion. "I will send him," says the Almighty, "against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets." (Isa. x. 6.) Cyrus, fired with the lust of power, levies an army against Babylon; he divides the Euphrates, conquers the kingdom, and takes the throne. He knows nothing of Heaven's purposes, and cares less. Dominion is everything to him, and no means too immoral or heartless for the achievement of his object. But, in all, he works out the designs of Him, who is "the Prince of the kings of the earth," who "called him to the work as a ravenous bird from the east," to *execute His counsel*. (Isa. xlv. 11.) The same with Vespasian and

Titus in their destruction of Jerusalem. Though a spirit most fiendish moved and directed these blood-thirsty and ambitious Pagans, yet they wrought out almost with letter minuteness the long-threatened judgment of Heaven. Examples of the same class may be multiplied almost indefinitely. Perhaps the most stupendous and striking is that of the crucifixion of Christ. "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together." (Acts iv. 27—28.) Thus, God's purposes are like gallant vessels, that are borne to their destination by the roughest surges of depravity. Onward they ever move, and He often rides upon the storms of hostile passions for their accomplishment. The fact is, all souls must serve him, either with their will or against it. It is not for us to determine whether we are to serve Him or not; our question is, whether we are to serve Him with the free concurrence of our nature, or against our wishes and our impulses, in such a way as to bless our being with His everlasting smile, or to curse our being with His everlasting frown. As nature moves on to the magnificence of summer, as well through cloudy skies and thunderstorms, as sunshine and serenity—so Providence advances its purposes, as well through such a mind as that of Ahasuerus, as that of Peter, or of Paul. As the leech, that sucks the patient's blood, works out unconsciously the design of the physician, so the ungodly world works out the plans of Heaven. He maketh "the wrath of man praise Him."

We learn from the event of this night that :—

II. HE ALWAYS OVERRULES THE CONDUCT OF SINNERS FOR THE OVERTHROW OF THEIR OWN PLANS. The very destruction which Haman and his accomplices plotted for Mordecai and the whole Jewish people, came upon themselves. On the lofty gallows that Haman had raised for another, he was hanged himself. Thus it ever is. The men of Babel build a tower in order to be kept in close social combination ; but

that structure leads to their confusion and separation. The Egyptians rush into the Red Sea in order to wreak vengeance on the fleeing Israelites ; but the channel in which they sought to bury their enemies, became their own grave. The priests and the Pharisees crucified Christ, hoping to destroy His influence in the country and in the world ; but their very act gave Him an influence that flooded their country and overwhelmed them with confusion. It is the very nature of sin to confound itself. Its struggles for pleasure will lead to misery ; for honor, will lead to degradation. Sin always conducts the sinner to a result never sought, never intended. What sinner aims, as an intelligent purpose, at the blasting of all his hopes, the loss of all his friendships, the everlasting ruin of his soul ? Yet to these, every sin he commits is conducting him.

Haman puts forth immense effort to ruin himself. What contrivances, what conferences with his friends, what sleepless nights and anxious days he employed to effect what he hoped would be the destruction of Mordecai and the Jewish people, but which proved his own ruin ! What efforts he employed to build up that gallows of fifty cubits high, on which he himself was to be publicly and ignominiously executed ! Thus it is with every sinner ; all his labor, however arduous and assiduous, must end in his own destruction. Like Haman, every sinner is building his own gallows. Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

We learn from the monarch's sleepless night, that—

III. HE SOMETIMES WORKS OUT HIS PURPOSES BY MEANS APPARENTLY MOST INSIGNIFICANT. What is it that now delivered the whole Jewish race—the millions of Israel from utter destruction ? *A mere thought that crossed the brain of this king on this sleepless night.* We talk about the little and the great ; we conceive of grand instrumentalities for grand results ; but the fact is, God is in everything—there is nothing small or great to Him. Hence, we antecedently should never have conceived of such means as He has

often employed to carry out His great plans. There are Theists who connect God only with what they consider great—with revolving planets, and majestic kingdoms—they foolishly consider that to regard Him as interested in the minute, is derogatory to His majesty. But science shows that that portion of the universe which is too small to be detected by the naked eye, and can only be seen by the most powerful microscope, bears proofs as convincingly of His presence and agency, as objects of the most stupendous magnitude. In every square inch of ground there are worlds expressing as much of God, as the mighty orbs that flame and roll in the expansive vault of night. In the history of man, God shows His connection with the minute, by employing the most insignificant and contemptible insects as agents to execute His will. Flies and frogs, locusts and caterpillars, have, ere now, been employed by Him to work out stupendous results in the annals of the world. By the little stone in David's sling, He slew Goliath, and struck terror into Philistia. By a passing dream in Joseph's brain he was raised to power in Egypt, and one of the greatest epochs in Jewish history was created. By trumpets, and pitchers, and lamps, Gideon overcame the hosts of Midian, which overspread the land as grasshoppers, and delivered his country. A few rams' horns levelled the massive walls of Jericho to the dust. Events, apparently the most trivial and casual, have effected wonderful results, ere now. The discovery of the babe by the princess of Egypt on the banks of the Nile, seemed a trivial incident, but it led to the crushing of Egypt and the deliverance of Israel. Phillip, meeting with the treasurer of Queen Candace, on the road to Gaza, seemed a trivial occurrence, but it introduced Christianity into Ethiopia. Let us learn practically to recognize God in the apparently little, as well as great, for both are alike to Him, and form essential parts of His one great system. Slightest occurrences are frequently pivots, on which revolve the subsequent history of individuals and nations. He who kindles up stellar systems, gives its

lustre to an insect's wing ; he who plants and roots up mighty kingdoms, numbers the very hairs of our head.

Brother, God is in history ; our world is not left, as a vessel on the ocean, to the mercy of circumstances ; it has a pilot to make even hostile winds and waves bear it to its ultimate destination.

“ There is a power
Unseen, that rules th’ illimitable world—
That guides its motions, from the brightest star
To the least dust of this sin-tainted mould ;
While man, who madly deems himself the lord
Of all, is nought but weakness and dependence.
This sacred truth, by sure experience taught,
Thou must have learnt, when wandering all alone ;
Each bird, each insect, flitting through the sky,
Was more sufficient for itself than thou.”—THOMSON.

The Genius of the Gospel.

Able expositions of the Gospel, describing the manners, customs, and localities described by the inspired writers ; also interpreting their words, and harmonizing their formal discrepancies, are, happily, not wanting amongst us. But the eduction of its widest truths and highest suggestions is still a felt desideratum. To some attempt at the work we devote these pages. We gratefully avail ourselves of all exegetical helps within our reach ; but to occupy our limited space with any lengthened archaeological, geographical, or philological remarks, would be to miss our aim ; which is not to make bare the mechanical process of the study of Scripture, but to reveal its spiritual results.

SECTION NINETY-THIRD.—Matt. xxvii. 33—56.

SUBJECT :—*Christ on the Cross.*

(Continued from Vol. XII., page 309.)

IN our last two disquisitions on this passage, we have been led to look on Christ, as He hangs upon the Cross, as *the Victim of Wickedness*, and as *the Exemplar of Religion*. We proceed now to look upon Him according to our plan as :—

III. THE DESERTED OF HEAVEN. About the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, “ *Eli, Eli, lama sabacthani.*” This expression, *Eli, Eli, lama sabacthani*, is

Hebrew in Matthew. Mark has it in Syro-Chaldaic ; a dialect which was supposed to have been used by our Saviour and His contemporaries. The expression is, undoubtedly, an ejaculation wrung from him by the intense sufferings of the moment. It was the cry of dissolving nature. There is a depth of sentiment about this utterance which we cannot fathom. It is said of Luther, when he pondered on this enigmatical utterance, that he continued for a long time without food, sat wide awake, and as motionless as a corpse, in his chair ; and when at last he rose from the depths of his cogitations—as from the shaft of a mysterious mine, he broke into an exclamation, “ God, forsaken of God ; who can understand it ? ” Though it has depths which our poor intellect cannot reach, we may be benefitted by inquiring, with devout humility, into its meaning. The language can only be taken in one of two senses—either as expressing a *fact* or a *feeling*. A *fact* in relation to God, or a *feeling* in relation to Christ. In other words, it must be considered either that God had actually deserted Him, or that Christ merely had the feeling that He had done so. The question, therefore, for us to determine is, which is the more probable supposition.

Can we accept the former ? Are there any just grounds for believing that the Eternal Father did now so change, either in feeling or conduct, towards His Son, as to warrant the idea of desertion ? Did anger now take the place of love in the Divine heart ? Did a dark frown of indignation take, for a moment, the place of a Father’s smile ? Did He, who before declared, “ This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ”—now, for a moment, feel, “ This is my abhorrent Son, in whom I am displeased ? ” We confess an utter inability to accept such an idea as this, however popular it may be in some theologies. To us it seems, in the last degree, repugnant to the character of Him who is immutable in love, and who has pledged Himself never to forsake those who trust in Him ; repugnant, moreover, to the distinct declaration of Christ, “ Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay

down my life." (John x. 17.) Christ felt that His giving His life in agony for humanity was rather a reason for Divine love than otherwise.

We are, therefore, left to the acceptance of the other idea, namely, that this cry expresses a feeling of desertion in Christ's mind. Our idea is, that, amidst the dying agonies of the moment, He felt as if the God of infinite love had left Him. Let it not be imagined, that, because it might be only a feeling in the mind of Christ, and not a fact in the Divine conduct, that it is not a terrible reality. So far as the subject is concerned, it is desertion in its most overwhelming force. The fact, unless it be felt, is powerless. Supposing that God in reality forsakes a man, and that man does not feel the fact, the desertion is nothing to him. On the contrary, supposing that no such desertion takes place on God's part, yet, if a man deeply feel it, it is to him the most terrible of realities. Christ, then, we may suppose, had the feeling in its mightiest force. It was only, of course, as a man that He suffered; and, as a man, the anguish of this moment might cloud His consciousness of nearness to Infinite love. It was, moreover, to Him, the hour of darkness at this moment. Satan was at the height of his power, and his huge and hideous proportions, as he passed before the eye of Christ's spirit, would intercept the rays of Divine love, and throw a dark and chilly shadow upon His heart. The feeling seems only to have been momentary; it was just as if hell rolled between him and the heavens—an eclipse for the time of His moral sun.

Accepting this, then, as the more likely interpretation, the utterance suggests three observations in relation to Christ at this moment: *That His sufferings were associated with the feeling of distance from God—that His feeling of distance from God was associated with a terrible amazement—and that His terrible amazement was associated with confidence in the Divine character:—*

I. THAT HIS SUFFERINGS WERE ASSOCIATED WITH THE FEELING OF DISTANCE FROM GOD. We make two remarks:—

First : *That it was natural under the circumstances.* There is a something in great suffering to superinduce this feeling in the mind. From the constitution of the soul, we instinctively conclude, that, where the God of infinite love is, there is happiness, and only happiness. Unsophisticated reason says, "In thy presence is fullness of joy." Where the sun is, there is light. Where love is, there is blessedness ; and the converse of this—where there is overwhelming suffering, God is absent. Thus Job felt in his trials, and he exclaimed, "O that I knew where I might find him." Thus David felt, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me." And thus the old prophets felt in trial, "Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself." Hence, too, souls in anguish involuntarily cry out for God's presence. The feeling, therefore, of Divine desertion in suffering is somewhat natural ; and being natural, is not wrong in itself. An involuntary feeling which agrees not with eternal realities, if it be not cherished, is not wrong. Another remark which we make concerning this feeling is :—

Secondly : *It is ever an element of anguish.* What greater misery can be imagined than a consciousness of being forsaken of God ? Saul felt this ; and in the dark cave of Endor, trembling before a wicked enchantress, he cried, "I am sore distressed, for God hath departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets nor by dreams." This feeling is the hell of the lost. Conscious banishment from God is perdition. Christ was now permitted to have this feeling, and in this feeling there was a mysterious hell.

II. THAT HIS FEELING OF DISTANCE FROM GOD WAS ASSOCIATED WITH A TERRIBLE AMAZEMENT. "Why hast thou forsaken me." His faith is tried, His reason seems to stagger. Surprise rushes on Him like a wild tempest. His faculties seem baffled with sore astonishment. *Why ?* "It cannot be that I have offended thee. I came into the world to do thy will ; and it has been my study and delight to this hour. I am about finishing the work which thou gavest me to do.

I am unconscious of the slightest deviation from thy will. It has been my meat, and my drink, to do what thou hast commanded. Why, then, hast thou forsaken me? Surely thou art not changeable in thy affections. Thy love is as immutable as thyself. What can be the reason of this awful desertion? My disciples forsook me and fled. I knew their weakness, and understood their conduct. But why dost *thou* forsake me, and leave me in this utter solitude of inexpressible anguish?" Here, then, the Holy Sufferer seems to have been tried in His reason; the desertion He felt was something most unaccountable and perplexing; violently clashing, it may be, with His clearest and most established ideas of His Father's wisdom and His Father's love. In His wonderful life, He had not, perhaps, any other trial of His reason equal in mental agony to this. We do not often find Him thus interrogating Heaven on account of its mysteries. As a man, of course, He had His intellectual trials, but His loving and loyal heart would supply such a solution as would allay distress. Had He not, however, been thus tried in some measure, He would not have been "in all points tempted like as we are;" for we, His poor disciples, are constantly tried in our reason with questions touching the character of the Eternal, and the procedure of His providence.

III. HIS TERRIBLE AMAZEMENT WAS ASSOCIATED WITH UNSHAKEN CONFIDENCE IN GOD. The felt mystery of His Father's conduct did not destroy His confidence in His character; He continues lovingly to look to Him as His God, "My God, My God." "On other occasions," says Bengel, "He was accustomed to say 'Father;' now He says 'My God,' as being in a degree estranged. Yet He does so twice, and adds 'My' with confidence, patience, and self-resignation." There is a lesson for us here. However much our rational faculties may be confounded by the mysteries of the Divine dealing, let us never lose confidence in the wisdom and the love of God. Let us feel, that, although He often seems to hide Himself from us, and move in ways

inscrutable to our poor understanding, that all His movements are prompted by infinite love, and directed by unerring intelligence. Let us trust Him where we cannot trace Him, and feel with Job, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." Though he might permit us to be overwhelmed with suffering, confounded in intellect, and agonized in heart, let us feel that He is still our God, and in our deepest hour of distress call out, "My God, My God!"

Germs of Thought.

SUBJECT :—*Present Duties in face of Future Dangers.*

"Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you : for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth."—John xii. 35.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Seventy.

WE have here one of those parabolic utterances that stand out with such perspicuity in the records of our Lord's teaching :—one of those happy similes, by which His meaning was made more significantly clear, alike to the learned Scribe and his own unlettered disciples, than if expressed in a bare matter-of-fact statement, which would only, may-be, have excited the smile of incredulity or the defiance of unbelief. His departure from earth the text reiterates and prophesies once more. It was a constant theme. He felt deeply how helpless the children would be when the parent soul had fled. His anxiety for their welfare and the future of His Church is discerned by His frequent reference to His death, with advice and admonition to His followers on the fulfilment of that event—the combination, alike, of man's power exerted in wickedness, and Divine weakness suffering in love.

We will pay our attention to the figure, as the best means of arriving at the true and full meaning of the fact ; the mental comparison of the two being better realized by a devout imagination and a thoughtful mind, than by any laborious efforts of the pen.

OUR LORD DECLARES THAT LIGHT IS BUT A TEMPORARY BLESSING. The sun of heaven is an essential of life. Without it, the insensate and animal creation, with the human race, would droop, wither, and finally decay. The regions, now teeming with life and luxuriant vegetation, would be as a world struck dumb, colourless, and void. A sunless world ! who can picture it ? The glorious rays that color the earth, and tint the sky ; that open the rosebud, and ripen our fruit ; that gild alike our hills, and burnish the waters at their feet—for ever absent ; and in their place a leaden pall, without moon or stars to cheer, unvarying and obscure ; hiding our shadows even in its universal gloom—the lurking place of evil, and the shadow of death to the good and pure ;—imagine it those only who are bad enough to wish it. An eye that can see beauty in a hedge-row flower, sparkles with exultation and delight at an autumnal sunset ; an event regularly repeated, but seldom thought about but as a necessary and oft-recurring thing. Other men who care not for the sun in its beauty, value it for its use. Their bread, their life, their all, depends upon it. Infidel, it may be, perhaps profligate, yet as well as all religious men, they would tremble with dismay were a fiat to go forth, that on such a day the sun would pursue his final round, and at eve sink down for ever. At first the infidel would laugh, and cry, “Nature cannot stay her course.” The timid and stricken sinner, now that danger from on high is looming, would exclaim, “And is our judgment come so soon.” But imagine the myriads when at last convinced, crowding from valley to hill-top and towering crag—voiceless, and awe-struck—watching the mighty element of light, the representative of the glory of heaven, sinking, amid the golden halo of her own diffusing, beneath

the horizon of the far-off sea. What a wail!—what a universal groan would break forth from the already dusky multitude; echoing, in tones of deep despair, the lamentation of our Lord, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken us!”

First : *This event would be doubly terrible because little expected.* It is due to the perversity of our natures, that what we believe is always ours, we strangely value little. The best of gifts is deemed the least, if we have enough thereof; consequently, the value of what we have is doubled in our estimation when we fear to lose it. The effect, then, of the entire perfection of the Divine government, tends but to harden men’s hearts by its very certitude. Accustomed to the never-varying rise and setting, at morn and eventide, of the sun above; the seasons following each other with the exactness of truth; the animal and vegetable creations subject to the same laws, and obedient to the like influences, from year to year—men never dream of any disruption, any disjointure, in the machinery of Nature. Because yesterday came, and the day before, so to-morrow will be sure to follow. From the history of the past, men augur the future; drawing bills thereon, and signing leases, almost of their own lives, for the next fifty or eighty years, with the same non-chalance, as if the world were really what they believe it—an established fact, that will never alter. If this were done in faith on the Divine goodness and protection; if, in being certain that the gifts of nature will be bestowed from year to year as for centuries they have been—men thanked God for all, then all would be as it should, and men and their Maker would stand in right relations. But shame on our race, it is not so. Men, unlike devils in this respect, do *not* believe and tremble. Nature to them is but food for speculation and analysis—not as it should be, matter for glorifying its Maker for His mercies. Because the hand that guides the stars and sprinkles the earth with its beauties,—is an unseen one,—our wise men of the west seek to fathom it all with line and plummet, and base its causation on a vague theory of their own imagining—a motive power, of itself aimless and

dead—Nature. Nature ! It is but the machinery of Heaven, the lathe upon which the whole universe is turned.

Secondly : *In anticipation of this sad event, our Lord enjoins us to make use of present blessings for our future good.* “Walk while ye have the light ;” and enforces His injunction by stating the result of our not doing so—“For he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.” This admonition comes fitly to our aid when somewhat recovering from the startling and fearful picture revealed to us by the prophecy, “Yet a little while,” &c. When plunged amid an unexpected and overwhelming trouble, a reasonable man’s first thought is, “What shall be done ?” His previous inaction and fancied security was criminal, but to be stolidly indifferent now would be sheer insanity. He must be up and doing. As in earthly matters, however trivial—the first leakage, the creaking wheel, or the bending shaft—is premonitory, to sagacious eyes, of further mischief, and therefore is remedied at once—so our Lord recognizes the truth of the principle in the words we have before us. We are to “walk while we have the light.” Now is the accepted time. To delay payment is to increase the debt. Half our journey deferred till to-morrow, necessitates a third day for its completion—which, then, may be impossible. A cold now may be inflammation to-morrow. To live only for the day—without thought, fear, plans or hope for the future, is but ignoble and animal. What should we be now, in this great city, but for the deeds, and thoughts, and goodness of past generations ? Who can walk through our stately cathedrals, or our moss-covered churchyards, and, when some well-remembered name—famous in history or in prisons blessed—meets the eye, not say, “I thank God for His mercies, and these His servants for their deeds.” They walked while it was day ; they journeyed here and rest hereafter. They went with the light, and did not allow darkness to overtake them. Think of the ultimate fate of those puerile journeyers, who fritter, and idle, and luxuriate the time they should spend in preparing for their travels. The moments, hours, and days passing over,

and leaving them still where they were—thoughtless and unprepared for the coming darkness. No remonstrances heed they; “It will not come yet, if at all;” and so their sorrowing friends leave them in the rear. But the time at last arrives; a shadowy light begins to fall—the idle start, the careless pause, the sinner shrinks—it becomes still darker, and then behold them: the terror, the rush, the dismay—as unshod, bareheaded, with wallets empty and naught else, they madly attempt the path they should have entered long ago. Some few, perchance, bleeding and footsore, prostrate and well-nigh dead, succeed in ending their journey as the laggard enters school—the last and least. The last in heaven! Who craves the place? The agony, if the last should be the one before you! And, then, the thousands overtaken by the terrible darkness without a hope of help—amid stony roads and precipitous crags;—in treacherous bogs, and among thorny boulders and yawning pits, to sink one by one at first, then by hundreds, and at last by thousands. Think of them living where at last they fall, ever striving to get out of their terrible location, but the absence of light preventing them. Oh how they curse their folly, that they “walked not while it was light,” as they were advised, besought, entreated; instead of being as they now are, objects for devils to laugh at, and angels to pity, illustrating the truth of the Divine utterance, “He that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.”

R. L., M.A.



THE MEMORABLE NIGHTS OF THE BIBLE.

(No. V.)

SUBJECT:—*Nehemiah, the Model Worker.*

“And I arose in the night, I and some few men with me; neither told I any man what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem: neither was there any beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon. And I went out by night by the gate of the valley, even before the

dragon well, and to the dung port, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed with fire. Then I went on to the gate of the fountain, and to the king's pool : but there was no place for the beast that was under me to pass. Then went I up in the night by the brook, and viewed the wall, and turned back, and entered by the gate of the valley, and so returned. And the rulers knew not whither I went, or what I did ; neither had I as yet told it to the Jews, nor to the priests, nor to the nobles, nor to the rulers, nor to the rest that did the work. Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire : come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach. Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me ; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work. But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard it, they laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What is this thing that ye do ? will ye rebel against the king ? Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us ; therefore we his servants will arise and build : but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem." —Neh. ii. 12—20.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Eighth.

TWO or three questions answered, may clear our way to the subject on which we are anxious to fasten especial attention. First: *Who was this Nehemiah ?* All that we know of his genealogy is that he was the son of Hachaliah, and brother of Hanani. Before this visit to Jerusalem, he held the office of cup bearer in the royal palace at Shushan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes. The office was one not only most lucrative, but most influential ; it brought him into very close relations with the Persian monarch, whose wealth was immense, whose fame was universal, and whose dominion was well-nigh co-extensive with the race. From the book we learn that he was a man of high natural endowments, great public spirit, a distinguished patriot, and an exalted saint. He was a man of the same noble mould as that of the Joshuas, the Calebs, the Baraks, and the Gideons of former days. Secondly: *When did he live ?* He lived about four

hundred and forty years before Christ ; he was contemporary with Daniel, Ezra, Esther, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. The long age of prophecy was drawing to a close when he lived ; he heard, perhaps, its last notes in the voice of Malachi. He lived in a period most distinguished in Grecian history,—Pericles, the greatest of Athenian statesmen, who made Athens the admiration of all Greece,—Phidias, the celebrated sculptor,—Simonides and Pindar, lyric poets of distinguished merit,—Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, distinguished dramatists,—Socrates and Plato, the world-wide philosophers, were all his contemporaries. Thirdly : *What was the work he now set himself to ?* It was to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, and to promote important reforms. Though the temple had been rebuilt under the administration of Ezra, the walls and gates of the city were in the state of ruin in which the Chaldean conquerors had left them. Fourthly : *What prompted him to this work ?* This is explained in verses 1, 2, 3, of chap. i. of this book. The tidings which he had received concerning the wretched state of Jerusalem, roused his patriotism and his piety, and prompted him to leave the scenes of opulence, honor, and luxury, to visit Jerusalem, and set to the work of restoring its ruined walls and gates.

The way in which he worked for this is fully revealed in this book. He was a model worker, and as such we shall consider him. He was not one of those religionists who had a few dogmas, and thought he did his duty by prating about them ; nor one of those religionists who consider that their duty consists in merely cherishing pious sentiments ;—he was a worker ; he had ideas of God and duty, and he embodied those ideas in his life, he translated them into actions. There are some who cannot bear to hear works recommended from the pulpit ; faith, grace, and doctrine—these things you must hold up, but works denounce. There are worthless works, it is true ; mere mechanical works, and works springing from improper motives. But works of faith and love, are, of all things pertaining to man's life, the most valuable and the most blessed. What are the truest doctrines and the de-

voutest feelings, unless they take the form of actions. They are only as blossoms on a fruit tree that never bears ; beautiful to behold, full of promise, but of no use. They are only as clouds without water, passing over scorched landscapes ; interesting us a moment with their fantastic forms, but passing away without answering our expectations or supplying our wants. How did Nehemiah work ? The verses we have read enable us to answer this question :—

I. HE WORKS THOUGHTFULLY. Before he commences this tremendous task, he spends some time in deliberation. He rises in the stillness of the night, and goes forth carefully to survey the ruins which he has come to repair. Probably the moon shone down upon them, making the desolation appear more desolate. There is always something solemn in the ruins of an old town, or of an old castle, reminding one of the horrors of desolating wars, or the devastating tide of time which bears all before it. Especially solemn are those ruins in moonlight. Amid the deep silence, one seems to hear the whisperings of the dead ; in the dim light, to see the ghosts of past ages. Who can tell the thoughts of Nehemiah, as he moved amidst the ruins of Jerusalem this night ? Jerusalem was the home of his fathers, the centre of his most hallowed associations. Exiled in a strange land, he knew what it was to sit down and weep when he remembered Zion. What memories would crowd upon him ! And how would his emotions heave under their influence ! But he did not go out this night to indulge in the romance of thought and feeling, he went out for a practical purpose ; he went out to measure the amount of work to be done, and to plan the best means for effecting it. Now, in this we should imitate him. Before we undertake a work, we should gauge its magnitude, and become convinced of its practicability. Christ Himself recommends thoughtfulness before action. (Luke xiv. 28—30.) For the want of this, many works are commenced and never finished. Men, from the impulse of the hour, put their hand to undertakings which they have never

given themselves time to understand, and for which they are not fitted; and hence, when the excitement is over, they abandon the work in disappointment, if not in disgust. Thoroughly understand what you would be about, before you begin.

II. HE WORKS INDEPENDENTLY. "I arose in the night, I and some few men with me, neither told I any man what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem." The few men who were with him, it would seem, were unacquainted with his thoughts, knew not his object, and therefore they could not for the time sympathize with him. He made his own observations, he drew his own conclusions, he formed his own plans. It is not thus that we are wont to act in this age. There are but few men who would take up any great work, and set about it themselves, without seeking the sympathy and counsel of their fellow-men. If we have some work which presses on us as a duty of general importance, almost the first thing we do is to call our friends together, get their sanction, and form a committee to aid us in carrying it out. We, in these days, work by organizations. Our individuality in work is scarcely seen or felt. We are the limbs of societies, wheels in organizations. This is a sad feature of this age. What we want is more individualism in action, more of the independent man, and less of the society. Two things will show the importance of this.

First : *The opinions of others cannot determine our duty.* Duty is between us and God. It is something that is perfectly independent of men's thoughts. Though the whole world voted against it, it would not be less binding. The individual man alone is the judge of his own duty, and woe be to him if he delegates that work to any one else! the moment he does so, he degrades his manhood.

Secondly : *The opinions of others may embarrass us in duty.* Duty generally comes to us in very legible writing, wants no interpreter, speaks to us in a very distinct voice. Amid the

din of human opinion there is danger of its losing its voice. Let us, therefore, cultivate the habit of acting independently ; not proudly, not despising the opinions of others, or refusing their co-operation, but working ever from the force of our own convictions. Independency is not pride ; there is no man more independent than Paul, yet no man more humble. "Unto me who am the least of all saints," &c. The men that have really served the world, have always been men of this independent mould. What committee sent Luther on his mission ? Under whose prestige did Whitefield go forth ?

III. HE WORKED INFLUENTIALLY. At length he speaks ; tells the rulers, the priests, what was in him, and what he intended to do, and they, seeing life in him, were touched at once with sympathy for his noble soul : "And they said, Let us rise and build : so they strengthened their hands for this good work." The next chapter shows, that, under his influence, all classes, male and female, set to work in right earnest. How came it to pass that this man had the power of setting all these people to work all at once, and some of them fine "ladies" and gentlemen ? In engaging them in this menial work, he used no coercive instrumentality, he had no civil power behind him, no battalions to enforce his words.

First : *The people saw that he understood the matter.* They recognized in him at once a man who knew what he was about, a man of intellectual grasp and might.

Secondly : *The people saw that he was thoroughly in earnest.* What he said he meant. Every word had emphasis, every look, inspiration ; every movement indicated a soul alive with duty.

IV. HE WORKED HEROICALLY. (1) Look at the sacrifices he made. He left the court of royalty, the scene of opulence and pleasure, to undertake a task the most arduous. (2) Look at the enemies he encountered. He had, at least, three desperate enemies, (Ver. 19.) Sanballat, Tobiah, and

Geshem. These men showed their opposition,—First : *By ridicule.* (Ver. 19, chap. iv. 3.) Secondly : *By indignation.* (Chap. iv. 7.) (3) The labor he effected. He finished the work in fifty-two days, notwithstanding all the difficulties that seemed insurmountable. He overcame the enemies who were malignant, he triumphed over all. He made up his mind to do the work in God's strength, and he did it. Did it, not to aggrandize himself, not for wealth, or fame, but for the good of his country, and the glory of his Lord.

V. HE WORKED RELIGIOUSLY. "Then I told them of the hand of my God which was upon me," &c. (Ver. 18—20.) First : *His impulses to act he ascribed to God.* Secondly : *His rule of action he derived from Him.* (Ver. 18.) Thirdly : *His sacrifices in the work he made for Him.* (Chap. v. 15.) Fourthly : *The spirit with which he performed his work was that of dependence upon Him.* (Chap. iv. 9—12.) This religion is the philosophy of his power. He felt himself the messenger and the servant of God. He felt that he was but the organ in God's hands. This is our strength and our only strength. He is our strength to overcome the evils of our own nature. He is our strength to resist the temptations which assail us. He is our strength to render any effective service to our fellow-men. He is our strength to help us to bear with fortitude and resignation the trials and afflictions of this passing life. He is our strength to enable us to encounter, &c.



THE MEMORABLE NIGHTS OF THE BIBLE.

(No. VI.)

SUBJECT :—*The Last Night of Babylon.*

"In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain."—Dan. v. 30.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Ninth.

OF the monarch whose terrible fate is here recorded, we have no real information but that which we gather from this book. He was the son of Nebuchadnezzar, and the last king of Babylon; he lived upwards of five hundred years before Christ, and his life was one of luxury and crime. Whilst we know not the particular man that dealt him the death-blow on this night, we are acquainted with the occasion. Cyrus—whose martial triumphs had brought under the dominion of the Medo-Persians the largest empire over which one man ever ruled had,—by drawing off the waters of the Euphrates, which ran through Babylon, entered, with his triumphant army, the city, took possession of the capital, and slew its monarch. This night was a terrible night, because it is connected with the advent of a terrible judgment from heaven. There are several things connected with the judgment that descended on Babylon and its monarch, that deserve our attention.

I. THE JUDGMENT OF THIS NIGHT HAD BEEN LONG THREATENED. Upwards of one hundred and sixty years before this, the taking of Babylon by Cyrus had been predicted. Ages before the deliverer was born, his very name is given and his work described. (Isa. xlv. 1—7.) Up to the very hour the probability seemed against such an occurrence. On the very morning whose night settled the destinies of the monarch and his empire—Babylon, with its high and massive walls, its lofty towers and broad ditches, seemed well defended and impregnable; but the hour had struck for the

fulfilment of the Divine purpose, and Cyrus and his mighty hosts were there. Thus it ever has been and ever will be; the judgment that heaven has threatened against impenitent sinners, will come, however long delayed. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily," sinners infer that it will never come. Come it must; the march of justice may be slow, but her steps are resistless, and her movements punctual to the moment. Another thing suggested as deserving our attention is :—

II. THE JUDGMENT OF THIS NIGHT WAS NOT AT ALL EXPECTED. This night began with a grand festival—a royal banquet. A thousand of the lords of his empire were there, revelling in the sensual convivialities of the hour. As if to express contempt for the God of the Jews, and to heighten the hilarity by profaneness, the monarch used the sacred vessels which had been borne from the temple at Jerusalem. Perhaps, amidst the riot of the talk and jestings of that season, many a contemptuous joke was passed as to the futilities of all invading projects. They were the great nation, their city the great city, their armies the great armies—none like them; yet at this very hour, Cyrus, the officer of eternal justice, was at their door. Thus it was then, as it often has been, that, at the moment men cry peace and safety, that moment destruction arrives. It was so with the antediluvians; "They ate, they drank," &c. It was so with the men of Sodom; it is often so with individuals as well as nations. Another thing, connected with the judgment that fell on the monarch and his empire this night, deserving our attention is :—

III. THE JUDGMENT OF THIS NIGHT ROUSED THE CONSCIENCE OF THE MONARCH TO AGONY ON ITS FIRST TOKEN. "In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand," &c. (ver. 5, 6.) This mystic hand over against the candlestick, startled the monarch's conscience as with the trump of doom, and changed the whole scene. "The king's countenance was changed," &c. His conscience was roused; and two things

are observable here. (1) The influence of an awakened conscience upon thoughts. (2) The influence of troubled thoughts upon the body. "The joints of his loins were loosed," &c.

IV. THE JUDGMENT OF THIS NIGHT HAD TERRORS NO MORTAL COULD ALLAY. (1) He tried the wise men. (2) He tried Daniel. Daniel gave him the meaning of the writing, but the meaning could afford him no consolation. It was very terrible.

V. THE JUDGMENT OF THIS NIGHT SETTLED FOR EVER THE FATE OF ITS VICTIMS. (1) The fate of Belshazzar was settled. He was slain. Death to him was an eternal termination of all his pleasure. His power, his influence, his wealth, his splendor, his luxuries, all were over. Death to him was the commencement of a terrible retribution. (2) The fate of the nation was settled. The empire of Babylon that night received its death-blow, and it soon vanished from the face of the earth. The Medo-Persian dynasty rose on its ruins. In the second chapter of this book we have an account of a colossal image, which Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream; "the head of that image was of fine gold," &c. The golden head of empires was now gone, and the Medo-Persian took its place, to be succeeded by another, and another, and another, until He comes whose right it is to reign.

In conclusion, a word to impenitent sinners. Let me remind you, there is a judgment for you, that judgment is *threatened*, that judgment may come unexpected, that judgment will strike mortal agony when it appears, that judgment will have a terror which no mortals can relieve—that judgment will settle our fate for ever.

SUBJECT :—*The Death of a Whole Family.*

“And Joseph died, and all his brethren.”—Exod. i. 6.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Tenth.

THE fact these words record is, of course, in no way wonderful or exceptional. In these words, the curtain falls on the scene in which Joseph and his brethren had all been taking their part in the great theatre of life, and that curtain is a funeral pall; and in just the same manner are the lives of all men brought to a close. The drama of every human life, whatever it may appear, is indeed a tragedy. This we are forced to believe, not only because of the solemn scenes through which it passes, and the momentous acts in which it is engaged, but because such a termination comes to all as is written in the words, “And Joseph died, and all his brethren.”

Though these words record no marvel, they seem to me very affecting and solemn. There is something grandly solemn in the thought of whole nations, with their wealth, might, and glory, passing away—as they have passed, and are in succession passing away—from the world’s wide stage. But there is something most tenderly solemn in the thought of whole families, those who have lived together in most endeared intercourse, bound together with the closest ties, with their hearts filled very much with the same purposes and love, all passing away, all entirely and for ever swept away from the stage of life, as is recorded here. “And Joseph died, and all his brethren.”

We shall look at these words as recording the *death* of a whole *family*, and notice :—

I. IT WAS A VERY LARGE FAMILY. “Joseph and all his brethren.” Here were twelve sons—twelve brothers. As all had spent their childhood in old Jacob’s home, all must

sleep the sleep of death in the "house appointed for all living." From Reuben the firstborn to Benjamin the youngest, all die, and the large family pass away as a dream. There is no chance or lot about death, by which one friend or brother can bear it for another. No! of the largest family that gladdens the house, or that mingles in social intercourse, each member must go the way of all the earth.

II. IT WAS A VERY DIVERSIFIED FAMILY. "Joseph and all his brethren" are words few and easily recorded; but each one of those twelve had a history distinct from every other; experiences unlike, and many altogether unknown to his brothers. Each one of these brethren was a world in himself, had an orbit of his own, and the few historical words that thus recount the names of them, suggest to us facts almost as infinite in number and variety as those suggested by some astronomical naming of the stars. Yes! there was a great diversity in this family. First: They were diversified in their sympathies. There is Joseph, who, even from his youth, lived a life that is a bright star in the firmament of Old Testament history—a life that yields a light to us in these far-distant days, and gives a lustre to the name of man. Joseph—filial, gentle, pure, strong, generous, forgiving. The characters of the others are not so prominent. Almost the first we see of them is that they were all envious and hateful towards their brother Joseph; and in their plot to get rid of him from among them and from their home, where he was the chiefly beloved of their father, we cannot but observe Reuben inclined to kindness, but cautious even to cowardice; and Judah, more mercenary than bloodthirsty, for he counselled that his brother should be *sold* as a *slave* rather than left in the pit. These two seem less cruel and bloodthirsty than the others, but all alike are hard-hearted deceivers and gross liars, as they dip Joseph's coat in blood and bring it to their father, suggesting that some wild beast has devoured him; and then in scandalous mockery of filial affection, they all rise up to comfort the weeping father

whose son they have sold as a slave, and whose heart they are breaking. Secondly : They were diversified in social position. How different the positions in life that these brethren occupied ! Joseph, having risen from the slavery into which his brothers had sold him, attained, at the age of thirty, all the dignity that Pharaoh could, with lavish hand, bestow, and all the honor and homage that the nation could yield. Meanwhile, his brethren in Canaan, still feeding their flocks, are afflicted with grievous famine, that threatens the lives of their father and themselves, and come as suppliants into far-off Egypt ; where, before Joseph whom they know not, they fall on their faces to the ground, begging he would sell them corn.

III. A VERY TRIED FAMILY. Every family has its own sorrows ; and whilst over some dwellings, thick dark clouds seem always to hang, even the sunny skies that arch the homes will sometimes grow dark and dull. Every home, not less than every heart, has to “ know its own bitterness.” This family, was, I think, pre-eminently tried. Very early in their history we read of *a sad trial, a bereavement*, and that of a mother. Whilst Joseph is but still a boy, his mother Rachel dies—and we know not how keen the sorrow such an event must have caused. There was also *discord among the brothers*. The harmony of hearts was destroyed, the spell of home broken, as soon as envy and hatred burned in the hearts of brothers against brother. Whilst Joseph, and each of the brothers for himself, had been passing through great trials, the whole family in Canaan *were afflicted with a grievous famine that threatened their lives*.

IV. A VERY INFLUENTIAL FAMILY. In addition to the influence, beneficial as it was vast, which Joseph wielded over Egypt, each of the twelve sons of Jacob was the source, the head, of one of the twelve tribes. These tribes have been the great religious teachers of the race, the priests and the prophets of humanity, the people especially chosen by God

to reveal Himself, to foretell the Messiah, to be the ancestors of His own Son.

V. A VERY RELIGIOUSLY PRIVILEGED FAMILY. The instructions of their childhood, the example of such a father, and the blessings that fell from his dying lips, convince us of this. From the whole subject we gather:—First: *A rebuke to family pride.* This large and influential family are compelled to succumb to the conqueror of the little child, the outcast, and the slave. Secondly: *A warning against seeking satisfaction in family joys.* Death will shiver and shatter all. Thirdly: *A lesson as to the right use of family relationships.* Live together as those who must die. Let the idea of death enter every home, not as a spectre to terrify, but as a monitor to inculcate purity and love. Fourthly: *Some strong reasons for expecting family meetings after death.* (1) Such different characters cannot admit exactly the same fate. Extinction is either too good for the sinner, or else a strange reward for the saint. (2) Family affection seems too strong to be thus quenched, &c.

Let us then anticipate family re-unions; with such a hope, death will wear a smile, and speak in tones of welcome, for he takes the living brother to him who has long since died. Since Joseph died, it is well that all “his brethren” should die too, for thus all the family may yet be brought to meet and mingle again.

U. R. THOMAS, *Bristol.*



SUBJECT:—*Argument against Sinning.*

“Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate.”—Jer. xliii. 4.

Analysis of Bomily's the Six Hundred and Eleventh.

THIS is a Divine utterance; it is brief, but expressive of an infinitude of feeling; it is the outgoing of the Divine heart against sin. It may be regarded as furnishing the mightiest arguments against a sinful course. From it we learn:—

I. THAT GOD DENOUNCES SIN WITH ABHORRENCE. He calls it "an abominable thing." Sin is represented in the Bible as a loathsome, odious, revolting, execrable thing. All kinds of sin are an abomination. "Lying lips" are. (Prov. xii. 22.) "Pride" is. (Prov. xvi. 5.) "Wicked thoughts" are. (Prov. xv. 26.) "Wickedness in all its forms," is. (Prov. xv. 9.) Sin is essentially an abomination. Three things show this :—

First : *The misrepresenting conduct of the sinner.* Sin has a self-hiding, self-dissimulating instinct. The spirit that is guilty of sin, seeks, by a tendency which has the force of law, to conceal it from others ; it feels it to be an execrable thing ; it decks with flowers the putrescent corpse ; it robes the demon in saintly garb.

Secondly : *The universal conscience of mankind.* Injustice, falsehood, self-seeking impiety, with all their kindred sins, the conscience of the world abhors. No sinner, however advanced, daring, and adroit in wickedness, can get his conscience to give one smile of complacency, one word of commendation to his conduct. His own conscience loathes and execrates his life. This is his misery ; this will be his hell. Its cry, deep down in the sinner's soul, is, "O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?"

Thirdly : *The history of the Divine conduct towards our world.* (1) Look at the judicial inflictions recorded in the Bible : expulsion from Eden, the deluge, the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah, the destruction of Jerusalem, &c. (2) Merciful interpositions. How has mercy wrought, through all past ages, to sweep abominations from the world ! through patriarchs, prophets, apostles, holy ministers, and Christ Himself. He came to "put away sin." We learn :—

II. THAT GOD HATES SIN WITH INTENSITY. He says, "I hate it." The Infinite heart revolts from it with ineffable detestation. God hates what ? Not existences ; for all sentient beings, from the tiniest insect to the loftiest seraph, attest, in their organization and experience, His love ; but

sin, the curse of creature being, is what he hates. This is the abomination of the Lord.

First : *He hates it, for it is deformity, and He is the God of beauty.* How offensive to the artist of high æsthetic taste and culture, are figures introduced into the realm of art, unscientific in their proportions, and unrefined in their touch ! In God, all beauty dwells in countless archetypal forms. The great universe is a partial expression of its variety and perfection. Sin is ugliness ; it is a hideous moustrosity, and the instinct of eternal beauty recoils from it.

Secondly : *He hates it, for it is confusion, and He is the God of order.* "Order," says the poet, "is heaven's first law." What exquisite order prevails through all departments of Divine action ! Everything is in its place, at its mission, and to its time. This order is the music of the spheres. Sin is confusion. It is a jarring note that grates on the ear of God. It is anarchy and misrule, rioting in a province of His harmonious empire.

Thirdly : *He hates it, for it is misery, and He is the God of love.* Sin is misery. He that commits it, wrongs his own soul. It withers the landscapes, poisons the fountains, and blackens the heaven of the soul. Every sin has in it the sting of the serpent, which, if not extracted, will rankle with fiery anguish in the soul for ever. God hates this evil, for He desires the happiness of His creatures. A desire to make happy is the philosophy of the creation. He desires even the happiness of the sinner. He hath no pleasure even in the death of the wicked. The saving work of Christ is the pleasure of the Lord. We learn :—

III. THAT GOD PROHIBITS SIN WITH EARNESTNESS. "Oh, do not this abominable thing." What depths of fervid loving solicitude are in this "Oh !" The exclamation indicates an irrepressible longing in the Divine heart for men to cease from sinning : "Oh, do not."

First : *Do it not ; you are warring against your own highest interest.* You are throwing all that is valuable in your being

away. Your course is suicidal. Every sin is a step in the broad road that leadeth to destruction.

Secondly : *Do it not ; you are warring against the well-being of the creation.* You have influence, and your influence is baneful in your sphere, and must spread. You are a blight in the atmosphere, a upas in the forest of life.

Thirdly : *Do it not ; you are warring against ME.* Every sin is a war against My ideas, My feelings, My plans, My institutions.

What an argument have these words suggested against sin. Sinner, dost thou feel its force ? Would that I could speak its force. Had I the tongue of thunder, I could not speak it fully out ; I should fail to do it justice. My lips shall sink to silence. Hush ! Let all voices be hushed, let the earth be still. Harken to the voice that comes from these solemn heavens stretched over us. It is the voice of the Almighty to thee, oh sinner, and it says, " Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate."

The Christian Year.

BY A CLERGYMAN.

Sixth Sunday after Trinity.

" Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death ?"—Rom. vi. 3.

LIKENESS to Christ is the destiny of the Christian. The disciple is called to resemble his Master in the grand incidents of His history, and in the principles of His character. Since man is both a creature and a free agent, acted upon and exercising a power over his own destiny, the likeness to Christ is produced by God's creative power, and by man's own agency. Certain particulars which are necessary to the

likeness, and over which man has no control, are brought about simply by God's creative power. The rest are effected by the same creative power, but in the way of increasing and directing man's free agency, and using it as an instrument of human well-being.

The beginning of spiritual life must be referred to a pure creative act. Although conversion from sin to God, with its elements of repentance and faith, is an act of the man himself, yet that act is caused by a secret gracious operation, which is without the limits of human consciousness. For all subsequent acts of the spiritual life, the man is necessitated to draw continually on the Great Source of strength and holiness. It is when he acts, that he feels he has received an accession of strength. The man with the withered hand was made acquainted with the new soundness of his member, when he obeyed Christ's command to stretch it forth.

The last steps in the progress of redemption are as simply due to creative action as the first. The resurrection of the body and the glorification of the complete man, will be effects of Divine power, working apart from the use or the possibility of human co-operation.

Our business with God's creative action is not to pervert it to an excuse for discouragement and inactivity ; for as the Divine summons to conversion is addrest to all, so no man has ever sincerely striven for conversion in vain. Christ did not mock the man with the withered hand when He told him to stretch it out ; nor does he mock spiritually impotent men when he commands spiritual action. The most ordinary actions of our daily life are as much due to power we are every moment receiving from God, as are the actions of the spiritual life.

Our business with God's creative action is threefold :—gratitude, prayer, and hope. Have we laid aside some evil habit, or successfully withstood some strong temptation ? The ability has been imparted, and demands thanksgiving. Do we desire to overcome the remains of sin, and to advance to higher degrees of virtue ? We may hope to succeed, if we

commence action in confident reliance on Divine help. Is the mystery of a glorious resurrection announced by Christ's authority? Let us use it as an encouragement amid the manifold weakness of our present condition.

In these various particulars, God creates us anew after the model of Christ—in the grand incidents of His history, and in the chief features of His character. He initiates the spiritual life, which is a resurrection after death unto self; and so is a new and high life of holiness. He fosters that life unto perfection, He conforms us to Christ in death, in resurrection, and in glory. Let us now turn to our own agency. This brings us at once within the sphere of duty. If God new-creates us after the model of Christ, both in regard to character and history, it is our part to imitate Christ's example. The imitation of Christ constitutes the whole duty of the Christian.

The imitation of Christ is a chief part of the Divine worship and homage which we pay to Him as our God. It is a familiar remark, that worshippers become like their Deity. Whom we warmly and constantly admire, we strongly tend to imitate. Whom we greatly desire to propitiate, we are likely to attempt to please by imitation. The converse also is true. No homage more emphatic, no worship more complete can be paid than by absolute imitation. Then, as worship is required from us by God, for the twofold end of His glory, and our well-being, so is it with absolute imitation. This highest homage of creatures to their Creator is His due and His requirement. The noblest privilege of man might be expected from his Father in heaven. That noblest privilege is the direction to imitate God. It is required in the Old Testament as the highest homage to the Godhead:—"Ye shall be holy: for I, Jehovah your God, am holy." (Lev. xix. 2.) It is inculcated in the New Testament as the most forcible expression of filial love and gratitude, and as our noblest privilege:—"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. v. 48.) God having made man capable of imitating Himself, it was to be expected

that He would set before the creature no model less perfect. Having once set the Divine model before the creature, it is inconceivable that He should afterwards retract it and substitute an inferior one. This would at once dishonor Himself by causing the homage of imitation to be paid to another, and would degrade the creature, by directing Him to render worship to one short of God and imitate a creaturely example. Yet we find the imitation of Jesus Christ to be as absolutely required from us as the imitation of God. The imitation of Christ is the grand Christian law. Not only is this required from us, but nothing else is required. This new law, however, is but the old in a new form. There is no retraction, no retrogression, no dishonor to God, nor degradation of man. Christ is God revealed in our nature, in imitating Him we are imitating God, rendering the best homage, enjoying the noblest privilege; only that now the imitation is easier because the model is "manifest in the flesh. It is to God's glory and man's dignity, "that all men should *thus* honor the Son even as they honor the Father."

The grand principles of Christ's character are godliness and philanthropy, or love towards man.* These are the key to His history, they underlie all His actions, and sufferings, and words. These He so illustrates as greatly to deepen, enlarge, and intensify our conceptions of both God and man; of the service due to God as infinitely venerable, of the kindness that must be shown to man as unspeakably dear to Heaven.

The death of Christ chiefly declares His character, and in this chiefly we are called upon to imitate Him. This is the point of the text, the sentiment of which is constantly occurring in the New Testament. To compare great things with small:—the spirit of an artist appears in all his works, but there is generally some one great effort in which his strength is concentrated, and by which he wishes chiefly to be remembered. The sphere inscribed in the cylinder was placed on the tomb of Archimedes. So, although godliness

*ἡ φιλανθρωπία ἐπεφάνη τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Θεοῦ.—Titus iii. 4.

and philanthropy were constantly apparent in Christ, they are the most forcibly exemplified by His death. That, therefore, He wishes His disciples to remember especially: "This is my body which is broken for you. This is my blood of the New Covenant which is shed for you and for many. This do in remembrance of me." The Lord's Supper is a monument sacred to the memory of Jesus Christ. The inscription was given by Himself. It is an authoritative announcement* of His death. But that death must be imitated as well as remembered. "Whosoever *will* (emphatically)† come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." If Christianity consists in following Christ, bearing the cross is the sum of what His disciples learn from Him. It is the test of their discipleship, as it was of His filial submission. It embodies the principles of His teaching. If we have not learnt this from Him we have learnt nothing. St. Paul, one of His most successful followers, declares himself to be "bearing about continually the dying of Jesus, that in his body the life also of Jesus might be shewn forth." (2 Cor. iv. 10.) This twofold imitation, this death to the old false selfish life, and resurrection to a new and true life of righteousness and love, are ever repeated in those who are faithful to their baptism. The old man is continually immolated in the perennial flame of love, whence the new man springs clothed in immortality.

Biblical Exegesis.

THE GOSPEL.

Καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· Πορευθέντες εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἅπαντα, κηρύξατε τὸ εὐαγγέλιον πάσῃ τῇ κτίσει.

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."—Mark xvi. 15.

* τὸν θάνατον τοῦ Κυρίου καταγγέλλετε.—1 Cor. xi. 26.

† Θέλει, Mark viii. 34,—so also in the parallel passages.

“And he said unto them, Go forth into all the world, and preach the Evangel to all men.”—DE WETTE.

THE word *Gospel* is commonly interpreted as meaning *glad tidings*. This is correct as far as it goes, but it does not express the whole force of the Greek word εὐαγγέλιον.

The word εὐαγγέλιον is obviously compounded of two,—εὖ, an adverb which is strictly the neuter of the adjective εὖς, *good*,—and ἀγγελία a *message*, which latter, in the compound, takes the termination *on*. So that the full meaning of the word εὐαγγέλιον is a *good or cheering message*.

It is evident that this interpretation adds to the other the notion of *authority*. A message is what is announced by a messenger, not as tidings of something which he has observed or heard only, but as an errand which he has been commissioned to deliver. The messenger has the authority of the person who sent him. If that person be God, the authority reaches further—not only is the messenger authorized and bound to deliver the message, but those to whom it is delivered are bound to believe the tidings, or obey the command.

It is obvious that ἀγγελία is derived from ἄγγελος, the word which is used throughout the New Testament for those spirits who are employed by God as His agents, to perform service or carry messages on great occasions. Thus, an angel rescued Peter from prison; an angel announced to Zacharias the approaching birth of a son, to Mary the birth of Jesus, and instructed the just but embarrassed Joseph how to act on the occasion. In Rev. i. 20, *the angels of the Churches* are officers who received messages from Christ and communicated them to the Churches. In Luke vii. 27, John the Baptist is styled the messenger (τὸν ἄγγελόν) of Christ, and in ver. 24, John's two disciples are called his messengers—ἄγγελοι. John was sent by the Lord, and the disciples were sent by John.

The same notion of delegated authority is seen in the constant association of εὐαγγέλιον with the verb κηρύσσειν, *to perform the office of a κήρυξ—herald*. The herald appears for a party whose message he delivers. The Gospel is sometimes called by St. Paul τὸ κήρυγμά μου, 1 Cor. ii. 4, and τὸ κηρύγμα ἡμῶν, 1 Cor. xv. 14; and in Titus i. 3, he says, ἐν κηρύγματι, ὃ ἐπιστεύθην ἐγὼ κατ' ἐπιταγὴν τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Θεοῦ, through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour.

The result is, that the Evangel or Gospel has these two properties,—it is cheering in character, and it comes to us with Divine authority. It has not been discovered or devised by man, but is matter of direct revelation and commission from a Divine Person. From this it seems to follow also that the Gospel is something very *definite*, something which neither the angel or herald, nor the party to whom he brings it, is in much danger of mistaking or forgetting. A message is generally both definite, and capable of being delivered *concisely*. Let us look again at the New Testament.

Here, then, we find the Gospel first set before us as a distinct and concise announcement of fact, Matt. iv. 23. And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom *κηρύσσων τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας*. Jesus, who was the Anointed, that is, who had received a peculiar Divine commission and qualification, authoritatively announces the inauguration of the promised kingdom. In Mark xvi. 15, which is the text at the head of this article, the Gospel which the Apostles were commissioned to announce consisted of the facts of the history of Jesus:—that He was the Christ the Son of God, His birth, teaching, miracles, death for our sins, resurrection and ascension. Hence, Mark entitles his Life of Christ, “The Gospel of Jesus Christ, Son of God;” and the constant habit of speaking of the Four Lives as the Four Gospels, shows the deep sense entertained by the Church that the Gospel consists of the history of Christ. The apostles were evidently accustomed to speak summarily of the more prominent facts of that history as the Gospel. Thus St. Paul says, 1 Cor. xv. 1, 2, “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye believed in vain.” Then he proceeds to state what he had “received and delivered as the chief things:”—Christ’s death “for our sins according to the Scriptures,” and His burial and resurrection.

In St. Paul’s charge to Timothy, 2 Tim. i. 13, “Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me,” he seems to refer to some concise statement of the Gospel, which was familiarly used by the apostles and other teachers, being transmitted by word of mouth. It probably much resembled

what is now called "The Apostles' Creed." In 1 Tim. iii. 16, there is a form, apparently of the same general nature, perhaps a fragment of some ancient hymn—lofty in idea, mellifluous in sound.

καὶ ὁμολογουμένως μέγα ἐστὶ τὸ τῆς εὐσεβείας μυστήριον			
[Θεός]	ὁς	A	ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί
		B	ἐδικαιώθη ἐν πνεύματι
(1)		A 2	{ ὥφθη ἄγγελοι ἐκηρύχθη ἐν ἔθνεσιν
(2)			
(3)		A B	ἐπιστεύθη ἐν κόσμῳ
		Z	ἀνελήφθη ἐν δόξῃ

The reading *ὁς* is accepted by Lachmann, Tischendorf and Tregelles. Whilst the question between this and *Θεός* (for *ὁ* has but trifling evidence) is of small consequence in relation to our Lord's Deity, which, irrespectively of this passage, is founded on a rock, the reading *ὁς* seems to have internal evidence in its favor from the passage itself. To say that "Great is the mystery of godliness," and then to say that "God was manifest in the flesh," seems to have a kind of obscurity not very Pauline. But with *ὁς*, all becomes consistent and clear. According to this, Christ before His manifestation was a secret—a secret in His person as Godman; in His character, which far transcends all that had previously entered the human heart; and in his mediation, which reveals the character of God. The great moral difference between the ancient and the modern world is owing to the disclosure of this marvellous Person. Christ is the secret of godliness, because (1) the godly yearned for His manifestation; Simeon "waited for the consolation of Israel;" (2) it was manifested chiefly to the godly, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father which is in heaven;" (3) the manifestation of it excites and nourishes godliness.

We have arranged the passage in lines, with letters and numbers, so as to display the mutual relations of its various members, its rhetorical anatomy. For the phrase *ἐδικαιώθη*

ἐν πνεύματι, compare 1 Peter iii. 18, θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκί, ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι. Bengel says excellently well: "Christ, while manifest in flesh, walked among mortal sinners, was thought to be like unto them, and indeed bare their sins: but then by death in the flesh He abolished sin which was thrown upon Him, and claimed for Himself and His disciples eternal righteousness, with the Father's full approval; withdrawing from the view of mankind, and by resurrection and ascension, entering that spiritual and glorious state which was fitting to His righteousness. Thus was He justified in spirit." He says on Rom. i. 4: "Before the resurrection, the spirit lay hid beneath the flesh; after the resurrection, the spirit of holiness altogether concealed the flesh." And on 1 Peter iii. 16: "*Flesh* and *spirit* do not properly denote the human and Divine nature of Christ: compare iv. 6, ἵνα κριθῶσι μὲν κατὰ ἀνθρώπους σαρκί, ζῶσι δὲ κατὰ Θεὸν πνεύματι. But they denote either, as far as it may be a principle of life and operation, although just, among mortals; or with God, when it is glorious also. . . For the rest, Christ having life in Himself, and being Himself life, neither ended nor began again to live in spirit; but as soon as he was loosened from the fleshly coil of infirmity, at once—as eminent divines acknowledge—the power of an unknown life was set free and began to exert itself in new and far readier modes."

Observe now the antithesis of ἐφανερώθη and ἀνελήφθη in A and Z. These are the extremes. Observe also the antithesis of ἐν σαρκί and ἐν πνεύματι in A and B. A 2 is a two-fold development of the manifestation, a manifestation to two orders of beings. A B is the result of A and B. Also mark the stately procession of (1) (2) (3) ὤφθη, ἐκηρύχθη, ἐπιστεύθη, up to the consummation ἀνελήφθη.

That termination ἀνελήφθη, seems to hint, that, as Christ in meanness and sorrow was a secret before His manifestation, so what Christ is, in glory and joy, is a secret now; and so will remain until the ἐπιφάνεια τῆς δόξης τοῦ μεγάλου Θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν, the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Saviour. Tit ii. 13.

And confessedly

great is the secret of godliness

[God] who was A manifested in flesh

	B	justified	in spirit
(1)	A 2	seen	of angels
(2)		preached	among Gentiles
(3)	A B	believed on	in the world
	Z	received up	in glory

It is evident, that although the Gospel consists in the publication of the facts of Christ's history, these are no Gospel as they appear to the eye of sense. If the eternal power and Godhead of the Creator are invisible, and are clearly seen in the things which are made, only when νοούμενα, that is, when the νόος is exercised so as to perceive them; much more do the outward facts of the life of Jesus reveal truth only to a spiritual eye. For the purpose of interpreting this most significant history, the apostles had received the Holy Ghost. The most concise Evangelic statement will contain the rudiments of the truths which are found at large in the Epistles. St. John, like an eagle, soaring higher than his brethren beyond the earthly clouds, returns to the expectant Church with two "messages," each of which was a Gospel. He had leaned on Jesus' breast at the supper, he had stood by the cross, and since his Lord's disappearance had held intimate converse with His spirit. Now he says, 1 John i. 5, "This then is the message ἀγγελία, which we have heard of him, and re-deliver ἀναγγέλλομεν unto you, that *God is light*, and in him is no darkness at all." Again he says, "This is the message ἀγγελία that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another." This message, though heard from the beginning, was now, after the manifestation of Christ, delivered with such additional emphasis, meaning and enforcement, that it was "a new commandment." To love one another was an old command; to love one another as Christ had loved them, was new. This twofold ἀγγελία then, of truth and duty, doctrine and command, was indeed an εὐαγγέλιον. No message more cheering can be conceived than that God, the Infinite, is light. No more delightful command can be received than to love one another.

To return to our original text, Mark. xvi. 15. The cheering message is to be delivered on Christ's authority to every

creature. Observe, a cheering message from Christ to every human being. Christ's truthfulness compels us to believe that *the message is of a character fitted to bring true gladness to every man.* He does not trifle with mankind.

The Preacher's Finger-Post.

CHRIST THE TRUSTEE OF HOLY SOULS.

"For I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."—2 Tim. i. 12.

You have here the religious life presented to you, under the figure of a *deposition*. Christ is the Depositary, and man is both the Deposit and the Depositor. Christ is the Trustee, and man the Trust and Truster. Let us look at the religious life under this figure, and we shall get from it three instructive thoughts:

I. That the true religious life INVOLVES THE ENTIRE SURRENDER OF OUR BEING TO CHRIST. "That which I have committed." What had he committed? Undoubtedly his entire self, body, soul, and spirit; the entire consecration of which to God, he elsewhere maintains to be man's reasonable service. Peter speaks of the religious life in the

same way; he urges his readers to "commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator." (1 Peter iv. 19.) What is meant in this dedication? (1) *Not the giving up of our personality.* It is not meant that the soul is so given up to Christ, that its individual consciousness is lost, that its personality is swallowed up as a dewdrop in the ocean. This is pantheism. The soul will ever retain its personality—stand eternally distinct from all other existences. The material universe may go through an endless series of transformations, and one existence be lost in another. Not so with moral mind. It is an indivisible, uncompoundable existent. It must always be itself. Nor does it mean (2) *The surrender of our free agency.* It does not involve the denunciation of our spontaneous impulses, and free will, and that henceforth the

soul is to be a mere instrument in the hand of another. On the contrary, the act secures the eternal freedom of the spirit. The human spirit can only get its true freedom by being placed in the guardianship of Christ. All it means is this, *the placing of our powers entirely at His service, and our destiny entirely at His disposal.* This committing of our existence to Christ must be regarded, not as an act which takes place at the period of conversion, or in the article of death, when the good man exclaims, like Stephen, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," but as the spirit of the whole religious life. The every-day breath of true religion is this, "Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth. (Psa. xxxi. 5.)

II. That the true religious life REQUIRES THE MOST UNBOUNDED CONFIDENCE IN CHRIST. First: *There must be unbounded confidence in His love.* Unless Paul had believed that Christ loved him as His own soul, and that He would deal more kindly and tenderly with him than he could deal with himself, he would not have committed himself into His keeping. Deep and unshaken was Paul's conviction in the reality,

the depth, and the tenderness of Christ's love. "I know in whom I have believed." I know Him, know His love. "He loved me, and gave himself for me." Who need doubt Christ's love? What a demonstration He gave of it upon the cross! Secondly: *There must be unbounded confidence in His ability.* What an Almighty capacity is required to take care of a soul, guide it safely in all its spontaneous movements, guard it securely from all the perils that may assail it, and provide for its ever-increasing wants! Paul felt that Christ had all the necessary ability, "I am persuaded that he is able to keep what I have committed unto him against that day." How could he doubt the ability of Him to whom he ascribed the creation of this magnificent universe? "By whom are all things created," &c. Christ alone is able to take care of the soul. No man can take care of his own soul, no Church can, no priesthood can. Christ is the only effective "Bishop of souls."

III. That the true religious life RESULTS IN THE HIGHEST DELIGHT IN CHRIST. Paul's language seems that of holy triumph and exultant joy. First: *He was happy in the prospect of that day.*

By "that day" he meant the final advent of Christ, the winding up of the mediatorial government, the settling of man's eternal destinies. Many terrible things, he knew, would happen before that day, and that day itself would be associated with circumstances of tremendous terror. Albeit he was happy in the prospect of all. He knew that Christ had said, "I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." "I am persuaded that neither death nor life," &c. Secondly: *He was happy in the prospect of what succeeded that day.* He knew that after that day there was an incorruptible inheritance, an unfading crown, and an eternal weight of glory. Hence, in the prospect of a terrible death, he said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course." Hence, at all times he gloried in Christ, he exulted in the Divine Trustee of his being. He was in Christ, and he felt himself safe.

THE CRY OF THE SOUL AND
THE ANSWER OF THE GOSPEL.

"But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to

bring Christ down from above :) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach."—Rom. x. 6—8.

A MAN of poetic genius has ever a strong tendency to personifications. He gives life to dead things, thought and feeling to unconscious objects, and makes even dumb matter speak. Hence, the apostle here personifies Christianity. In this passage he gives her tongue, and makes her speak to the men who are looking out in the distance for the good which stood in all its plenitude by their side. His description of Christianity here is simple, compendious, and expressive. He calls it the righteousness which is of faith, which means the system which is to make men right by believing—believing in the heart. A heart-belief in the Gospel makes men right—right in their spirit, their motives, their lives, their relations. The text leads us to consider two things:—

I. THE CRY OF THE SOUL.

"Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven?" First: *The spirit of this cry is identical throughout the race.* What is it? It is a heart craving for some good

in the *external*, the *distant*, and the *supernatural*. This craving explains much of the history of the ages. Secondly : *The objects of this cry are various throughout the race.* Whilst all cry for good, all do not cry for the same kind of good. The *summum bonum* varies with different men. The text implies that the men addressed are seeking the Messianic good, and crying out for Christ. This was the grand wish of the Jewish world. Christ is the desire of nations. If we analyze the cry in the text, we shall find that it includes three things. (1) A deep consciousness of want. Man is a needy creature, and the deepest need of man, as a sinner, is a "Christ," some Divinely-anointed one who shall make right his soul. (2) Belief in the existence of a provision. Man's primitive notions of a God, and his experience of the fitness of the world to his physical needs, give him the conviction, that, wherever there is a deep want, there must be somewhere a Divine provision. (3) A felt necessity of some agency to bring the provision near. Who shall ascend ? The good is somewhere, who shall bring it near ? What priest ? What sage ? What measures ? What men ?

II. THE ANSWER OF THE GOSPEL. First : *The answer discourages this tendency.* "Say not in thine heart." Christianity discourages the tendency in man to look for good outside, far off, and in the miraculous ; it bids him to look within, enjoy the near and the natural. Secondly : *The answer reveals the provision.* "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart." The good, to satisfy the deepest cravings of the human soul, is to be found in the Word, that Word which was made flesh and dwelt among us. Christ meets all the exigencies and aspirations of the soul, and He is near to every one who has the revelation. (1) Near in the Scriptures. The Scriptures are not far off from thee ; not in distant lands, distant libraries, or churches, but in thy house, thy home, &c. They are they that testify of Him. (2) Near in thy memory. Thou hast been taught the biography of Christ, &c. Thoughts of Him are constantly coming up to thee, "Nay, it is even in thy heart." Much of thy speech is shaped by sentiments concerning Him. Even in thy "heart." He has often stirred thy emotions. The preaching of Him has often evoked the tenderest sympathies of thy nature.

THE FINAL ADVENT.

"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen."—Rev. i. 7.

THE high probability is, that this is a prophetic description of Christ as He came in His providence to the destruction of Jerusalem. Between His final advent and this, there are so many striking resemblances, that the description of the one is remarkably applicable to the other. Applying the words to the final advent, we have four facts concerning it.

I. CHRIST WILL COME. Reason and conscience, as well as the Bible, teach this. Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of it. Job knew that He would stand again upon the earth. Christ and His apostles frequently and unequivocally taught it. (Luke ix. 26.)

II. HIS COMING WILL BE TERRIBLY GRAND. "On the clouds of Heaven."* The grandest objects to mortal eyes are the heavens that encircle us. Their vast expanse and immeasurable height, all radiant with rolling orbs in boundless variety,

* See "Homilist," Vol. IV., p. 123, New Series.

seem to bear us into the awful depths of infinitude. Anything strange on the face of those heavens has always a power to strike terror in human souls. Christ is represented as coming on "the clouds." Daniel, in a vision, beheld Him thus. (Dan. vii. 13.) Christ Himself declared that thus He would come. (Matt. xxiv. 30, and xxvi. 64.) Angels have declared the same. (Acts i. 11.) John beheld Him on a "great white throne," so effulgent that the material universe melted away before it. How unlike the despised Galilean!

III. HIS COMING WILL BE UNIVERSALLY OBSERVED. "Every eye shall see him." It is an event in which all are interested. Men of all ages and lands, from Adam to "the last of woman-born." Men of all social grades and mental types, are all vitally concerned in this stupendous event. Hence *all shall see Him*. First: *All shall see Him immediately*. Now we see Him *representatively*, by His words, and ordinances, and ministers. But then we shall see *Him*. Oh, to see *Him*! Secondly: *Shall see Him fully*. Not one shall have a partial view, a mere passing aspect, but a full, complete vision. His full person will fall complete on

every eye-ball. Thirdly : *Shall see Him impressively.* The universe had never had such an impressive sight of Him before.

IV. HIS COMING WILL BE DIFFERENTLY REGARDED.

First : *To some it will be a scene of poignant distress.* "They that pierced him, and all the kindreds of the earth, shall wail because of Him." "They shall look upon me whom they pierced." (Zech. xii. 10.) What inexpressible and inconceivable anguish will the rejectors of Christ experience now. "The kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men," &c. (Rev. vi. 15—17.) Secondly : *To others it will be a scene welcomed with delight.* "Even so, Amen." The good in all ages have said, "Come, Lord Jesus." To His true disciples it will be a period in which all difficulties will be explained, all imperfections removed, all evils ended for ever. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be," &c.

PAUL AT ROME, A PRISONER.

"And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him. Acts xxviii. 30, 31.

THIS is the last account we have of the Great Apostle. His biographer takes leave of him here. Here the curtain falls and hides the greatest actor. The greatest lives have a close. We shall take the verses as suggesting :—

I. THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY. What is it? "Things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ." Not the things which concern man's religious speculations or organizations, but the things which concern Christ. What are the things which concern Him? The verse itself suggests the best answer; the things pertaining to the *reign of God over the human soul* : "Preaching the kingdom of God." The grand aim of Christ's mission to the world was to establish this reign of God, to bring human spirits, the world over, under the sovereign sway of Divine truth and love. Nothing concerned Him more than this, nothing so near to His heart as this. This He urged in His appeals. "Seek ye first the kingdom," &c. This He illustrated in His teaching; all His parables were about the kingdom of God; for this He taught the world to pray, "Thy kingdom come," &c.; for this He lived and died; "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world," &c.; for

this He works now in heaven, and will work until the kingdoms of this world shall be the kingdoms of our God. What is the end of Christianity? To bring souls under the reign of God. And the things that most concern Christ are the things that He has designed and fitted to accomplish this. These things are the Gospel. The verses suggest :—

II. THE TRIALS OF ITS DISCIPLES. Here we find one of its most faithful and illustrious disciples a prisoner in Rome. The apostle had escaped the malignant rage of the Jews by appealing from Felix, the Roman governor at Cæsarea, to Cæsar. This brought him to Rome as a prisoner. He was not, however, cast into the cell where prisoners were usually confined. Through the recommendation of Festus, on the intercession of the centurion, he was committed to the care of a soldier, and allowed to dwell "in his own hired house;" though, according to Roman law, chained to his companion, and, therefore, subject to a thousand inconveniences and mortifications. The imprisonment of the apostle in Rome teaches us at least two useful lessons. First: *That the best of men are not to expect exemption*

from trials. Amongst the sons of men has there ever appeared a man more eminent in spiritual worth, more God-like than Paul? And yet how tried he was! "In perils often," &c. Let us not murmur in affliction—Paul felt that his was for his good. "Tribulation worketh patience," &c. Secondly: *That the most useful minister is not essential to Christ.* He labored more abundantly than they all, and more successfully too, we think; but now his activity is restrained: he is not allowed to be at large, he is a prisoner. Let no man overrate his services; Heaven can do without us. The verses suggest :—

III. THE MISSION OF ITS MINISTERS. What is that? "Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ." First: *His preaching was teaching.* It was not empty declamation, nor a repetition of platitudes, however logically put or rhetorically arrayed. It was *teaching*; imparting that to the intelligence of his hearers which they knew not before. Teaching implies *learning* on the part of the hearer, and *superior intelligence* on the part of the minister. Secondly: *His teaching was the indoctrinating of men in*

Christian essentials :—Things which concerned Christ and God's kingdom. He used all his knowledge, which was extensive, rich, and varied, to illustrate and enforce *these things*. He determined to know nothing amongst men but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. "He counted all things but loss," &c. The verses suggest :—

IV. THE FORCE OF ITS INFLUENCE. First : *The force of its soul-sustaining influence*. "With all confidence ;" with a fearless courage, here in Rome, in the midst of its enemies, this poor prisoner for two long years continued to preach the Gospel. From other passages we learn, that during this time he did a great deal more than preach to them who came to hear him. He wrote numerous letters. According to Lardner, he wrote his letter to the Ephesians, his second letter to Timothy, his letter to the Philippians, his letter to the Colossians, his letter to Philemon, and his letter to the Hebrews. How indefatigable he must have been in his work to have accomplished all this. He did this "with all confidence." He was afraid of no man. Sages, poets, artists, heroes, priests—he met them all "with all confidence." Secondly : *The*

force of its aggressive influence. Many, from time to time, of all classes, were drawn to the hired house of the poor prisoner, and not a few were converted. He tells us, in his letter to the Philippians, (i. 12—14) "that the things that had happened to him had fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel, so that his bonds in Christ were manifested in all the palace, and in all other places ; and many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by his bonds, were much more bold to speak the word without fear." Amongst the multitude he converted there, was Onesimus, a runaway slave. (Phil. 10.) The fact that the Gospel was thus spread by Paul when a prisoner, shows its independency of all worldly power and wealth. It has won its most illustrious victories in direct opposition to the patronage, the power, and the authority of the world.

THE LIFE OF THE TRUE—A
FEAST.

"Thou preparest a table before me
in the presence of mine enemies."
Psa. xxiii. 5.

It is customary with some men to take the most gloomy view of life. Life to them is a vale of tears, a gloomy desert, a howling wilderness.

Such a view is neither right nor Scriptural, nor accordant with the experience of the truly good. To the ill-tempered, dissatisfied, and melancholy, all in their sphere of life will be shadowed with clouds, and shaken with storms. On the other hand, to those whose tempers and aspirations are in sympathy with the law of universal benevolence, the world will be more or less sunshine and melodious. The text leads us to look at life in the brightest aspect, namely, as *a feast*. We observe:—

I. The life of the true is **A FEAST**. The figure implies three things:—First: *A variety in the pleasant*. Variety is ever the characteristic and charm of banquets. What a rich variety of blessings are spread out for the enjoyment of the good—sensuous, intellectual, social, and religious. Secondly: *An abundance in the pleasant*. Every appearance of meagreness and scarcity, is carefully avoided in a feast. How abundant the blessings prepared for the true! “All things,” says the apostle, “are yours.” Thirdly: *A social participation in the pleasant*. A feast is not for one, but for many, and generally for those of such kindred sentiments as will heighten enjoyment. The

godly soul in joyous fellowship with kindred natures, &c. We observe:—

II. The life of the true is a feast PREPARED BY GOD. “Thou preparest.” First: *He prepared the feast for the guests*. All the rich viands of life are provided and spread out by His munificent hand. Every blessing is from Him. Secondly: *He prepares the feast for the guests*. The feast is sufficient for all; the few only participate in it. No one really partakes of life as a true feast, who has not been influenced and prepared to do so by the Master of the feast Himself. Three things are necessary for a guest to enjoy a feast. (1) Cordial sympathy with the master. (2) Healthfulness of system. (3) Appetite for the provisions. Men, naturally, have not these, in a *moral* sense. God gives them, through His Gospel, by His spirit. We observe:—

III. The life of the true is a feast prepared by God in the PRESENCE OF ENEMIES. A truly good man, who thoroughly enjoys life as a banquet, and moves amongst his compeers with sunny smiles and genial sentiment, is sure to have enemies. Envy and jealousy will create them by osis. The spiritually

morbid and diseased, who cannot enjoy the blessings of providence and religion, will look at him with the eye of envious hate. Devils, too, envy such a man. A good man has ever had enemies, and ever will. David had them. They now surrounded him as he was feasting at the table of God's Providence in the robe of Israel's monarch. There is something gratifying to a man in feasting before enemies. First: *There is a gratification of the feeling of independency.* Enjoying a banquet with the eye of an enemy on you, you seem to dare him to do his worst. You have the happy feeling that unrighteous malice cannot injure you. Secondly: *There is a gratification of the feeling of benevolence.* Sitting down, enjoying a banquet sufficient for all your enemies, and to which they were in-

vited, but would not enter—you feel, that as they look on, there is a splendid opportunity for them to learn their folly, relent, and attend the entertainment. You hope they will say to themselves, “What fools we are to be outside here, indulging in peevish envy, lean-hearted, and half-starved, whilst our neighbours are so jubilant at the board of plenty. Thirdly: *There is a gratification of our religious feeling.* You feel, as you enjoy the rich banquet provided for you, that you have an opportunity of showing your enemies the wonderful bountihood of the Master of the feast. You give Him the praise. Brother, would'st thou make life a feast? Then get the true spirit of life in thee—the Spirit of Christ. Be godly; for “godliness is profitable unto all things, it has the promise of the life which now is,” &c.

The Pulpit and its Handmaids.

FRIENDS AND ENEMIES.

No virtue is more frequently mentioned, and less practised, than friendship. Every man imagines he has friends; yet every man may here find himself deceived.

What we generally call friendship is a spurious virtue that vanishes in time of trial. Adversity is the touchstone of friendship. King Tarquin declared it owing to his misfortunes and banishment, that he ever discovered who were his

friends or enemies; because he could then no longer oblige them. Such observations have opened the eyes of others, upon finding themselves deserted in misfortune by those they esteemed their fastest friends. Aulus Gellius has preserved to us an elegant fable of Æsop, to this purpose:—"A lark, who had her nest in a corn field, going to seek food for her young, charged them to observe carefully what they should see or hear in her absence, and give her an account of it at her return. Whilst she was gone, they overheard the owner of the field order his son, as the corn was now ripe, to desire their friends to assist in reaping the next day. This, the trembling young ones related to their mother, and begged her to look out for a place where they might be secure. The old lark was not terrified at the account, but bid her little brood have patience; saying, 'If the owner trusted to his friends only, the field would not be reaped to-morrow.' The next day he left them again, with the same charge as before. The owner of the field returned, in hopes of reaping, but waited the arrival of his friends in vain; then said to his son, 'I perceive our friends are unwilling to come; go, therefore, to our relations, and pray them to assist us in reaping to-morrow.' This also the frightened young related to their mother, who again bid them be comforted; 'for,' says she, 'it is as silly to trust to relations as friends; and, therefore, be assured the corn will not be reaped to-morrow.' The lark left her brood the third time. The owner came again, and finding no relations appear, said to his son, 'Thou seest that in time of need, a man has neither friends nor relations; therefore, let thee and I take *each* of us our sickle, and, reap to-morrow by ourselves.'

This the young larks related to their mother; who then cried, 'Now it is time to move off, for the corn will infallibly be reaped to-morrow.' She therefore immediately transferred her brood to a safer place, and the corn was reaped."

AUTHORS AND CENSORS.

An ancient writer says, "When Jupiter is angry with a man, he makes him a schoolmaster." We may say, "When Jupiter hates a man, he makes him an author." The hope that flatters a writer, of living in history, and receiving honor after his death, may in some measure alleviate the anxieties he feels in writing. But the better he writes, the more hatred and envy he may happen to meet with. Authors make themselves no bitter enemies by ordinary writings. Nor is censure, or clamor, always the sign of a bad book. Perhaps a good writer may have the pleasure to hear his works commended; whilst a bad one has the mortification of seeing his labors moulder in the shop. This, however, is no constant rule; for, as most readers have but a vulgar taste, so vulgar tastes have sometimes a great currency. Many an excellent author has written to little purpose. Upon the first appearance of a new book, some suspicious tempers imagine that every word has a latent meaning. They try the lock with false keys, whilst the door stands open; and at length, they find no other key was wanting but one to open their own understandings. As some readers see things that are not in authors, others see nothing at all; and take the most labored and useful performances for low stuff and idle common-place. To open the eyes of such people, seems impracticable. The fable of the mole

suits them : " A young mole entreated his mother to bring him a pair of spectacles ; because he had observed that men wore them." His mother replied, " The money would only be thrown away, child ; for the spectacles which men use are of no service to molewarps." Jealous, weak, and suspicious readers are a kind of cabalists, who, by their own self-applauding explanations, can make a word speak what they please, or like those subterraneous gentry, *Klinis Maccati*, whose eyes were so sharp, that they could see freckles, but

not the face ; the smallest faults, but not the subject ; and were almost blind by dint of poring. It is bad, writing in a study that swarms with flies ; where the author must sit with his pen in one hand and a fly-trap in the other. Snarlish readers are like unruly servants, disturbing their master. Their unjust censorious temper, impertinent noise and clamor, cause an author to miscarry, or oblige him to suppress and stifle such writings as might possibly benefit mankind.

Literary Notices.

[We hold it to be the duty of an Editor either to give an early notice of the books sent to him for remark, or to return them at once to the Publisher. It is unjust to praise worthless books ; it is robbery to retain unnoticed ones.]

THE REVIEWER'S CANON.

In every work regard the author's end,
Since none can compass more than they intend.

A COMMENTARY: CRITICAL, EXPERIMENTAL, AND PRACTICAL, ON THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS ; Vol V., Matthew to John. By the Rev. DAVID BROWN, D.D. Glasgow : William Collins.

THE biography of Christ is the substance of the Bible. He who believes in that, is no infidel ; and he who most fully and faithfully interprets its spiritual significance, is the theologian that the heart of humanity requires. The fourfold Gospel, it is well said, is the central portion of Divine Revelation. Into it, as a reservoir, all the foregoing revelations pour their full tide ; and out of it, as a fountain, flow all subsequent revelations. Every new attempt, therefore, put forth with competent ability and becoming spirit, to bring out, with increased beauty and force, the soul-quickening import of these Gospels, free from the meanness and narrowness of human systems, we hail with thankful hearts. Thus we welcome the present volume. We have carefully examined the

author's interpretation of some of the most difficult passages, and have been not a little refreshed by the exercise. He has touched into life a few texts that some commentators had almost killed by their isms, and buried beneath their verbosity. Even in the few instances in which we have not been able to accept his conclusions, we have not been a little pleased with his spirit of fair play, his air of conscious fallibility, and his scholarly adroitness. The work, though learned, is popular. The author reaches his conclusions as a genuine scholar, but parades not his prowess as a pedant. The pages are not thickly strewn with words and sentences from the dead languages. On the whole, for ministers—who, in this age of public activity, have but little time critically to examine the text and the original for themselves—and also for enlightened private students of God's Book, this work will prove invaluable. Dr. Brown brings to his task great qualifications as an expositor. For a Scotchman, he is remarkably free from the trammels of systems. His sympathies are more with the Divine genius of Gospel things, than their human forms. He does not confound the truth with its wrappings. As a scholar, he thoroughly knows the old verbal costume in which the Divine idea came, and he parts the earthly folds and shows the heavenly treasure. We heartily commend the work, and thank Dr. Brown for it.

REVELATION. By the Authoress of "Revelation the Orb of Light," and "Revelation the Orb of Light and Life." London: Wertheim, Macintosh, & Co.

THIS is a work that we scarcely know how to describe. In the preface—which is addressed to her children—the authoress informs us that she has three objects in view. "First, to trace the mystical Seven of Revelation; to show that seven dispensations in our world's history are clearly revealed to us, and six more, probably of fourteen thousand years, foreshadowed to us. To show that the seven days of creation were seven cycles, with intervening nights, periods of rest, probably of fourteen thousand years. Secondly, to trace the doctrine of the Church, as revealed to us by God; and, Thirdly, to trace the river of salvation from its source—from the first communication of the Eternal Spirit with our earth from a past eternity when God said, *Light be*, and *Light was*," &c. From this statement of a threefold object, which we have given in the words of the fair writer, our readers may guess the long, winding, and foggy lane into which the work conducts. Whilst there are many admirable sentiments in the book, there is so much of what appears to us irrelevancy, incoherency, and confusion, that we fear the toil of writing will not be compensated by an extensive circulation. The book to us is like a windy night-sky covered with clouds; here and there a star gleams out, which, as the clouds are in rapid motion, is soon hid, to be succeeded by others, which in their turn are buried in like fashion.

THE LIFE OF OUR LORD UPON THE EARTH, IN ITS HISTORICAL, CHRONOLOGICAL, AND GEOGRAPHICAL RELATIONS. By Rev. SAMUEL J. ANDREWS. London: Alexander Strahan and Co.

THIS work does not enter to any extent into any critical enquiries respecting the text of the evangelists, nor does it discuss questions respecting the authorship of the Gospels, the time when written, or their relations to each other. Nor does it deal with the subject of their inspiration, or explain His discourses. There are numerous works that do all this with more or less ability and success. The author arranges the events of Christ's life—as given by the evangelists—so far as possible, in a chronological order; and states the ground of this order. He also considers the difficulties as to matters of fact, which the several matters, when compared together, present;—or are supposed by modern criticism to present. The work which the author has undertaken, is, confessedly, one of great importance; and one which, in consequence of the hostile criticisms of late years, was much required. The author has consulted the best writers for his purpose, and produced a work which every minister who sees it will hasten to procure. It is a book for constant reference in a preacher's study.

SMALL SINS. By the REV. ALEXANDER BALLOCH GROSART. Second Edition. James Nisbet and Co.

THIS little book is a discourse, founded on a strange passage, in a strange book; the text is, "Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines, for the vines have tender grapes." To show the author's ingenuity, we need only mention the six lessons he draws from the passage. (1) Small sins are as really sinful as larger; "they are foxes." (2) Small sins are insidious, "they are *little* foxes." (3) Small sins do damage, they "spoil the vines." (4) Small sins do damage to what is most precious, they "devour the *tender* grapes." (5) Small sins, which do all this damage, are to be destroyed—"Take us the foxes." (6) Small sins are to be carried to the lord of the vineyard—"Take *us* the foxes." Whilst we cannot say we admire all this, the thoughts of this discourse contain much that is adapted to do good.

TWO CHRONOLOGICAL CHARTS OF EUROPEAN HISTORY, FROM THE FOURTEENTH TO THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY; also, Key to the same. By S. B. BISHOP, of the Secretary's Office, H.M. Customs. London: Freeman.

THESE charts are designed to supply in history the same assistance which a map renders in geography. They present at one view the chief European States, with the leading events which have occurred in them during the four centuries that have gone. The student, at a single glance, can discover the relative importance of nations, and of the same nations

at different periods, their sovereigns and their dates, the length of their reigns, and the various changes that have taken place in their territory; the principal revolutions, revolts and insurrections, conquests and cessions of territory, colonial acquisitions, wars, invasions, battles and sieges, treaties of peace and alliance; miscellaneous events, political, commercial, and religious;—generals, statesmen, and other celebrated personages being inserted at their proper places, and the exact date at every place given. The idea is an excellent one, and the execution admirable. Conceptively and delineatively, the author has shown great genius, and we trust his work will meet with that public acceptance which it deserves. All schools should have these charts.

SERMONS BY THE LATE REV. JAMES HARRINGTON EVANS, M.A. Edited by his WIDOW. London: Nisbet and Co.

HERE are thirty sermons, by a minister whose generation is fast dying out. Mr. Evans, as a preacher, was Calvinistic, emotional, and very savory to a certain class of hearers; the chief excellency of his sermons is, their Scripturalness; every page is interspersed with prayers, not always legitimately relevant, from the Holy Book. They remind us of Flavel's productions.

THE TWO TESTIMONIES; OR, THE ORACLES OF GOD, AND THE LAW WRITTEN IN THE HEART, COMPARED. Second Edition. AND THE LAST OBJECTIONS OF RATIONALISM, being a Reply to BISHOP COLENSO'S PENTATEUCH AND BOOK OF JOSHUA, CRITICALLY EXAMINED. In a Series of Letters to a Friend. By Frederick W. BRIGGS. London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co.

IN this volume, the author institutes a comparison between the Revelation of God in the Book, and God in the Human Soul. He assumes both to be equally Divine, and in perfect agreement with each other, so far as they go; he shows, however, that the revelation of the Book contains much that transcends the light of nature, and the discovery of reason; and from this fact he argues its super-human character. The work is suited to check and correct the religious scepticism of these times.

THE EVANGELIC THEORY; OR CHRISTIANITY—NOT THEISM—MOST IN ACCORDANCE WITH MORAL DEVELOPMENT. A popular Appeal Adapted to the Times. London: Henry James Tresidder.

THIS work reflects great credit upon the author, who shows us he is a layman; he has struck out many good thoughts here, on vital questions; thoughts, that the preachers of religious systems would do well to ponder.

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF RICHARD SIBBES, D.D. Edinburgh : James Nichol.

THIS volume contains treatises and sermons, from the Epistles to the Corinthians. We have already characterized the productions of this author, and recommended the enterprize in which the public-spirited publisher is engaged.

SHAKESPEARE. Edited by W. CARRUTHERS and W. CHAMBERS. Illustrated by KEELEY HALLSWELLE. Vol IX. London and Edinburgh : W. & R. Chambers.

WE are glad to receive this, the ninth volume, of this matchless edition of the works of our great dramatist. This volume contains Macbeth, Timon of Athens, Pericles, and Titus Andronicus. This is the edition for parents to present to children, and friend to friend.

THE LIFE OF WILLIAM CHILLINGWORTH. By P. DES MAISEUX. Edited, with Notes and Translations, by the late JAMES NICHOLS. London : William Tegg.

THE life of this distinguished Church of England divine, and triumphant defender of the Protestant religion, will always have attractions for the advocates of private judgment in matters of religion.

THE ART OF PREACHING. By JAMES BEGG, D.D. Edinburgh : James Nichol. Though we are far enough from adopting all the views of Dr. Begg about preaching, his pamphlet is an able one, and may be read with advantage. OUTLINES OF BIBLICAL THEOLOGY. By JOHN ELSTOL. London : W. Reed. This book is *multum in parvo*. It contains, in a few pages, a body of divinity. It is the theological book for lay and local preachers. THE REV. H. FISH, M.A., AND WESLEYAN METHODISM. By M. EVAN LEWIS, B.A. London : Elliot Stock. Mr. Lewis having been called in question by the Rev. Mr. Fish, a Wesleyan Minister, for certain statements respecting Methodism, in his Work on "Independency," here defends himself, and ably justifies his positions. ROMANISM AND RATIONALISM AS OPPOSED TO PURE CHRISTIANITY. By JOHN CAIRNS, D.D., Berwick. London and Edinburgh : Alexander Strahan and Co. Whatever proceeds from the pen of Dr. Cairns will always repay the attention of the student.



A HOMILY

ON

Should Heaven be sought as a Distant,
or enjoyed as a Present, Good?

"Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at rest."—Psalm lv. 6.

"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."—Matt. vi. 10.

A DESIRE for happiness is natural, therefore universal, and designed for benevolent ends. It is one of the most potent forces in every soul. It is one of the mighty springs that keep the machinery of the world in perpetual action. Somehow or other mankind make sad mistakes about happiness, and hence the wrong direction of this native impulse, and its wrong direction is at once a crime and a curse. Men's movements in search of happiness are as diversified as their ideas of the *summum bonum*. A thousand false notions of the brain are employed, by the poor deluded soul, as lamps to light her in her anxious quest for heaven. Even professed Christians are not free from mistakes on this question. They differ alike in their ideas of the heaven they aspire to, and in their methods of seeking it. There are at least two states of mind, not a little dissimilar, prevalent amongst them in relation to their search after heaven. The one enjoys it as a *present* good, the other seeks it as something *distant*; the one finds its expression in the language of the old Hebrew saint, "Oh that

I had wings like a dove ! for then would I fly away and be at rest ; ” and the other in the model prayer of genuine Christianity, “ Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. ” The former state of mind, namely that which is in quest of heaven as a *foreign* good, is far the most prevalent in all churches. Denizens of the Christian world abound, who, with dissatisfied spirits, not only disregard, but almost despise, the profusion of good which Almighty Love has lavishly spread around and about them, and fix their anxious eyes upon a heaven that lies beyond the grave, and up in the starry regions of space. This state of mind, which is ministered to by the theology of some churches and the ministry of many pulpits, is as objectionable in its nature, and as pernicious in its influence, as it is popular and abounding. The latter state of mind—that embodied in the prayer which Christ gave his disciples—is the more right and wholesome state of mind to be cherished in relation to heaven. A comparison of the two may aid us in forming an enlightened judgment as to their merits, and help a healthful direction of our energies after the chief good.

We observe :—

I. THAT THE ONE IS MORE REASONABLE THAN THE OTHER. The state of mind which seeks to get heaven out of our sphere, activities, and circumstances, here on this green and lovely earth, seems to us far more rational than the state of mind which is constantly looking away for it in the invisible and remote. Two things will show this :—

First : *That man has in an inexhaustible degree all the elements of heaven here.* Man, as a creature, is endowed with animal sensibilities, intellectual tendencies, moral affections, and varied activities ; and his heaven consists in a full satisfaction of all the parts and appetencies of his complicated nature. With the Gospel in his hand, does not the world in which he lives richly abound with elements to yield him such satisfaction ? The fruits of the field, the beauty of the landscape, the grandeur of the ocean, the glory of the

skies, form an inexhaustible elysium for his senses. Everything in the vast domain of nature, from the corpuscle to starry systems, and every sentence in the great Bible of Christ, challenge him to mental effort, and open fields of contemplation in which his intellect may revel in a heaven of thought. God, the infinitely Loving One, comes to him not only in the grandeur and beauty of nature, but in the person of Christ—who is the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person—in order to fascinate, absorb, enrapture, and transport all the affections of the soul. Occupations of every variety, adapted to his various powers, are suggested to him in nature, and revealed to him in the Bible, admirably suited to bring out into harmonious development all the activities of his being. These sources of happiness are here in a fathomless plenitude. Could man exhaust them during his short stay here, there would be reason in looking away for a fresh supply and for sighing for a foreign heaven ; but he who enjoys most of these felicities during his stay here, only takes one sip from the majestic rivers that roll on from age to age unexhausted and inexhaustible.

Secondly: *That these inerhaustible elements are here and now available.* They can be enjoyed in some measure at once. No fiery sword guards the Eden now. All depends upon the moral state of the heart. A thousand heavens of blessedness can yield no happiness, if the heart is not in supreme sympathy with the supremely good. The state of soul which qualifies for heavenly enjoyments comes only through faith in Christ. There is no heaven for man, neither here nor yonder, now nor then, but that which is entered through Christ. “I am the door,” said He ; “by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture,”—be “saved,” as truly saved now as he will be in any celestial world. He is nourished with heavenly joys, goes in and out in all the scenes of nature and walks of life, and finds pasture. His life is a banquet of joy ; he feels heaven lying about him. Thousands in every age have experienced this, and thousands feel it now ; aye ! and not a few in every age whose outward

circumstances have been most unfavorable. In privations, sufferings, obloquy, persecutions, martyrdom, sainted men in all ages have felt the transports, and hymned the strains of the upper heavens. Which, then, is the more reasonable state of mind? The one that comparatively overlooks, and but very partially enjoys, the infinite sources of happiness available to us in this life, in sentimental aspirations for foreign and imaginary joys; or the one, that through faith in Christ, so enters into the blessed activities and joys of the present, as to indulge no restless longings for the future?

We observe:—

II. THAT THE ONE IS A MORE USEFUL STATE OF MIND THAN THE OTHER. This will appear if we consider:—

First: *That the one leads to a more cheerful life than the other.* That monastic feeling which turns away with disgust from the earth, and keeps its eye upon a foreign heaven, may at times fill the mind with mystic visions of future good, and give a passing rapture to the heart. But such visions yield not that joy which fills up the entire man, and abides with him as a permanent inheritance. It is a mere passing mood, a meteor sweeping over the misty sky of the soul, flashing a momentary radiance, but leaving a deeper gloom. About such characters there is such a breath of morbid excitability, such an air of unnaturalness, as render their influence upon their fellow-men anything but healthful. The unsophisticated worldling too often recoils from them as men of simpering sentiment and morbid souls. They exert but little real power for good upon their age. The other state of mind, however, leads to true and natural cheerfulness. It gives sunshine to the man; his spirit is genial, and his conduct glows with a radiant life. Having a soul full of goodness, he sees good in everything; being harmonious within, he hears music all round him; he beats out melody in every effort; his “soul delights itself in fatness;” he is “blessed in his deed.” Like a man marching to music, he treads the path of life with a joyous step. As a Christ-regenerated man,

he is "satisfied *from* himself;" his happiness springs up from a good nature within, as a well of water to everlasting life. The life of a man, with such a cheerfulness, cannot fail to be influential for good. The melancholy man is socially weak; the moody man rises to power only in his happy mood; the permanently cheerful man is ever strong for usefulness.

This will appear if we consider :—

Secondly : *That the one leads to a more practical life than the other.* The man who participates but little in the Divine joys to be had in this life, but sighs ever for the remote heaven, can scarcely be said to live a practical life. His dominant idea is to get away from this world to another, which he imagines to be a happier one. To accomplish this, he trusts to an outward scheme of mercy, and spends his religious activities in invoking and extolling the mercy which he hopes will take him to a better world. If, as is not always the case, he should feel a desire to promote the everlasting happiness of others, his efforts are more with the speculative and sentimental part of man, than with the everyday life. He lives in theories. Hence the very superficial influence which men of this class have upon their age. The other state of mind leads to conduct far more influential for good. The man who finds his heaven here by having the true love, doing the right work, and living the Christ-like life, is bringing down heaven to the men and women around him. The great ideas, the controlling spirit, and the holy aspirations which make the heaven of angels, he is embodying in his own daily life, and practically exemplifying to the hearts of others. His life is a stream gushing from the fountain of Infinite love, and it touches into heavenly life and beauty all within its sphere. His life is a mirror, which reflects on all around the glories of the upper world. We observe :—

III. THE ONE IS MORE SCRIPTURAL THAN THE OTHER. The Bible teaches us two things on this point :—

First : *That heaven consists in the inner state of the soul and not in external circumstances.* Let us take a few passages.

“Thou wilt show me the path of life.” “In thy presence there is fullness of joy, at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.” The spiritual realization of that presence is to be enjoyed here: “Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance.” This experimental knowledge of the Gospel is to be enjoyed here: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” They *are* blessed. They see God now. “The world seeth me no more,” said Christ, “but ye see me.” “This *is* life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” Eternal life is heaven, and this eternal life is in this knowledge. “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” This refers not to the future, but to the present, for the apostle adds, “God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit.” “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” These heavenly blessings are enjoyed now, and these heavenly places are occupied now: “For we which have believed do enter into rest.” The heavenly rest is entered now by faith. “For we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory.” This heavenly glory comes now into the soul thus changed by the Spirit of God. The doctrine of the Bible, in fact, upon this is, as Milton expresses it, “The mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of hell.” It shows still further, that heaven consists in the state of the mind, and not in *external circumstances*. The Bible gives us examples of men enjoying heaven even under the greatest trials. Paul and Silas sung praises unto God in prison. Stephen had an enrapturing vision of heaven in the enraged council. James says, “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.” Peter says, “If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you.” Paul says, as the result of his

own experience, and that of his suffering brethren, "We glory in tribulations, also : knowing that tribulation worketh patience ; and patience, experience ; and experience, hope ; and hope maketh not ashamed ; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost." And again, "As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing." And this experience agrees with that of tried Christians in all ages. Men in abject poverty have said, "My cup runneth over." Men in chains and dungeons have exulted in the glorious liberty of the sons of God. The Bible teaches :—

Secondly : *That the grand work of man in this world should be to promote this state of soul, both in himself and in his fellow-men.* What is the grand desire of Christ concerning His people ? He prays not that they should be taken out of the world, but kept from the evil. He "ascended up on high, led captivity captive, and received gifts for men." What for ? "That the Lord God might dwell amongst men." And the grand obligation everywhere urged on man, is, not to struggle after some distant heaven, but to seek first "the kingdom of God and His righteousness ;" to agonize to enter in at the straight gate of truth and holiness. In one word, to follow Christ ; to have His spirit ; to live the same grand life of devotion to truth, humanity and God, as He did ; to endeavor to bring down to this earth, as He did, the ideas, the spirit, and the habits, that make the heaven of seraphs. When all men shall do this, this earth will bloom with the beauties, and radiate with the glories of Paradise. Jerusalem will descend from above. God will dwell amongst men, and wipe away all tears from all faces. Violence shall no more be heard in the land, wasting nor destruction within its borders ; its walls will be Salvation, and its gates Praise. The sun shall be no more its light by day ; neither for brightness shall the moon give light : but the Lord shall be unto us an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. We observe :—

IV. THE ONE IS MORE CERTAIN OF REALIZATION THAN THE OTHER. We believe, on the undoubted authority of Holy

Scripture, that there is in the universe a paradise of rest and joy, into which the genuine disciple of Christ enters immediately at death. Where it is, no mortal knows; it is everywhere through the radiant regions of immensity, where moral evil is not; and moral evil, we believe, occupies but an insignificant spot in the creation, as compared with the immeasurable domains of holiness. The perfect heaven of souls is the scene from which sin and all its fell consequences are excluded for ever. Hence, so far, it has the advantage of this earth as a sphere of life and activity, and it is neither unnatural nor wrong to desire it. But it is painfully questionable with us whether the men who are sighing and struggling for this heaven *as an end*, will ever reach its blessed scenes. It seems to us that the all-loving Creator has so constituted the human soul, that it can never enjoy that which it supremely seeks for the sake of its enjoyment. He who seeks happiness as an end, is like a man running to catch his shadow; the fleeter he runs, the fleeter runs his shadow. "Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall find it." He, that from loyal love to heaven, and loving sympathies for men, becomes oblivious of his own personal interests and gratifications, can alone rise into the true paradise of soul. The deeper sinks our egotism, the higher rises our joy. The man of true godliness, who, in doing his daily work on this earth, feels a sacred pleasure in all the works of God, and a holy joy in all His labors, has already entered the heavenly world. Every day he penetrates farther towards its beatific interior. His death will quicken, rather than interrupt, his march. He feels himself "come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."

“True happiness is to no spot confined;
 If you preserve a firm and constant mind
 'Tis here, 'tis everywhere.

Brother, say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven to bring happiness down. Be filled with that spirit which is the inspiration of heaven, and thou wilt no longer dirge, “Lord, what a wretched land is this which yields us no supply,” but thou shalt find paradise blooming about thee. If the kingdom of God is within thee, thou hast heaven in thy daily life, and thou art rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory. The perfect heaven of the future is not divided from a life of godliness in the present by any great chasm. There is no purgatorial gulf to cross. The path of life trod here by the Christ-like spirit, leads right into it, and every step in that path brings the traveller more within its entrancing visions and soul-bracing airs. “Grace is glory begun.” Holiness here is heaven, as the “Tree of Life,” growing, blossoming, and advancing, to its perfect fruit-bearing stage. He whose mind is here absorbed in the desire for the *distant* heaven, is like a man walking through scenes of exquisite loveliness, and fields of delicious fruit, with his eyes so fixed upon a mirage scene in the distance, that he sees no beauty on his way, starves amid the exuberant provisions which lie about his path, and reaches what he sees, an exhausted pilgrim, to find the object of his search vanish into air. Infuse, then, the spirit of heaven into thy present life. Moral goodness of soul, springing from faith in Christ, is your way into the present and all the future heavens of your being. New heavens are entered by new virtues. Give all diligence, then; add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness. Or—as Milton has it—

“Only add

Deeds to thy knowledge answerable; add faith,
 Add virtue, patience temperance; add love,

By name to come call'd charity, the soul
Of all the rest. Then wilt thou not be loath
To leave this paradise, but shalt possess
A paradise within thee, happier far."

The Genius of the Gospel.

Able expositions of the Gospel, describing the manners, customs, and localities described by the inspired writers ; also interpreting their words, and harmonizing their formal discrepancies, are, happily, not wanting amongst us. But the eduction of its widest truths and highest suggestions is still a felt desideratum. To some attempt at the work we devote these pages. We gratefully avail ourselves of all exegetical helps within our reach ; but to occupy our limited space with any lengthened archaeological, geographical, or philological remarks, would be to miss our aim ; which is not to make bare the mechanical process of the study of Scripture, but to reveal its spiritual results.

SECTION NINETY-THIRD.—Matthew xxvii. 33—56.

SUBJECT :—*Christ on the Cross.*

(Continued from page 15.)

WE proceed now to look upon Christ as he is suspended upon the cross, in the other and final aspect in which this history presents Him. The record has led us already to contemplate Him as the *Victim of Wickedness*, as the *Exemplar of Religion*, and as the *Deserted of Heaven* ; and now, according to our promise, we shall view Him as the *Power of God*. Though nailed to the cross, and apparently at the mercy of His malignant foes, He yet exerts a power altogether supernatural and manifestly Divine. On the cross He displays a power at once over the *material system*, and the *spiritual world*.

I. HE DISPLAYS A POWER OVER THE MATERIAL SYSTEM. The effects of His power in this department are seen upon the sun, the earth, the temple, the bodies of the dead. (1)

“Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour,” *i.e.*, from twelve a.m. till three p.m. The forms of expression, “over all the land,” ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν, (Matt.); “over the whole land,” ἐφ’ ὅλην τὴν γῆν, (Mark and Luke)—do not determine how far the darkness extended. Whether the darkness extended literally over the whole earth or not, we pass by as a question of no importance. Obviously it wrapped Jerusalem and its neighbourhood in a mysterious gloom. There is no accounting for it on natural principles. There is no known law of nature that can explain it. An eclipse of the sun it was not, for it was at the time of the passover, and that was at full moon, when an eclipse is impossible; besides a total eclipse can never last longer than a quarter of an hour, and this darkness held its rayless empire for three long hours. It was produced undoubtedly by the direct fiat of Omnipotence, and symbolized some terrible things to the spiritual world. (2) “The veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.” There were two veils, one before the holy and one before the most holy place. (Exod. xxvi. 31—26.) This veil symbolized that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest. It excluded all from that sacred spot, and none dared enter save the high priest, and he only once a-year, on the great day of atonement, and then never without the blood of atonement in his hand, which he sprinkled upon and before the mercy-seat seven times. (Lev. xvi. 14.) That thick veil remained for ages, impressing man with the awfulness and difficulty of approaching the Most High. But now that veil was rent from “top to bottom.” Rent, not by human hand, or any secondary cause, but by the will of Him, who now, by His death, opened up to universal man a way of free access to God. (3) “The earth did quake and the rocks rent.” A great earthquake is said by the Latin writers to have occurred about this time, but it cannot with certainty be identified with the one in the text. With His dying eyes He looked upon the earth and it trembled; with His thoughts He touched the mountains and they smoked.

Extraordinary rents and fissures are observed in the rocks near this spot. There they stand in ghastly attitude, as witnesses to attest the terrible fact. (4) "And the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." This was a grand symbol of the fact that His death had to do with departed as well as existing humanity, and that He swallowed up death in victory. Elsewhere we have referred to these subjects, and we need not enlarge further upon them here.* Such, then, is the power which we see the dying Jesus exert upon the realm of dead matter.

II. HE DISPLAYS A POWER OVER THE SPIRITUAL WORLD. This is seen in three things:—First: *In the salvation He vouchsafed to the dying penitent.* There hangs the dying thief. The aggravated sins of a whole life press on his soul with a weight heavy enough to sink him in the lowest hell. He is about sinking into the black profundities of despair. A Divine power, however, touches his soul into penitence and faith, and with his last breath he cries to Jesus for salvation, "Lord remember me." And what is the result? That dying One showed himself mighty to save. He rolled the crushing burden of guilt from the man's conscience. He renovated the man's corrupt nature. He pardoned His sins and cleansed His Spirit. He plucked him, as a brand, from the burning. He saved him to an everlasting paradise. "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Here is power, the highest kind of power in the universe, the power to save ruined souls involved in the greatest guilt, and in the last moment of their mortal existence. Christ is indeed the power of God for this purpose. His power is seen:—Secondly: *In the authority which He exemplified over the celestial region.* This comes out in the wonderful response He gave to the cry of the dying thief, "To day shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Luke xxiii. 43.) By general consent the

* See "Homilist," Vol. XII., page 129.

word paradise here refers to the celestial world—and Christ's words imply a commanding power over that world, a power to go into it Himself, and a power to take others thither. His power extends to all the realms of being that lie beyond the sphere and ken of mortals. Though dying, He felt that the universe was His, and that in person He would soon be exalted above all heavens.* His power is seen:—Thirdly : *In the change which He wrought in the mind of the centurion.* The centurion was the commander of the Roman soldiers who attended at the place of execution. Luke represents him as saying, "Certainly this was a righteous man." As this Roman commander was undoubtedly a polytheist, his exclamation must be regarded, not only as a declaration that Christ was no impostor, but as also indicating a thorough change in his own mind. He passed from Paganism to Christianity; he reached the conviction of the Messiahship of Jesus. "Truly this was the Son of God." It is worthy of note, that Judas who betrayed Him, Pilate who condemned Him, and now the Roman soldier who superintended His crucifixion, all attest His innocency. The darkened heavens, the quaking earth, the riven rocks, the opening graves, the mysterious reverberations and throes of an earth mantled in sackcloth, were perhaps the means to work this conviction into the heart of the centurion. But Christ's power was at once the cause and efficiency of these tremendous means. His power is seen:—Fourthly : *In attracting to Himself His true disciples.* "And many women were there, beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him : and which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children." These women were His disciples, they had ministered to Him during His missionary tours in Galilee. (Luke viii. 1, 3.) They accompanied Him from Galilee, and ministered to His wants on His final journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, and now they stood around His cross. He was the magnet of their souls.

* For a full development of the truths suggested by the cry of the penitent thief and the response of Christ, see Vol. XII., p. 2, New Series.

He held them there as the sun holds the planets. He here displays a power, therefore, to bind spirits to Himself; the power of an unearthly excellence and of an unconquerable love—the moral power of God. This power He exerts now in heaven. He is in the midst of the throne, and binds the hierarchies of heaven and the true Church of Christ to Himself. His power is seen :—Fifthly : *In the effect it produced on the consciences of sinners.* “And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned.” (Luke xxiii. 48.) “They smote their breasts :” a brief but graphic description of the mingled grief, remorse and terror, which convulsed the souls of those who were spectators of this awful drama. This is only a specimen of that power which His cross has ever exerted to rouse the guilty consciences and break the hard hearts of sinners. The same effect has been produced in all subsequent ages, wherever He has been faithfully exhibited to the spiritual eyes of men as crucified for sinners. It is cheering to believe that scarcely a Sabbath closes during which there have not been thousands, who, at the sight of Christ upon the cross, have smote their “breasts” with deep contrition for their sins, and “returned” to their homes to dedicate themselves to the will and service of Heaven. Thus we have viewed Christ upon the Cross in four aspects : as the Victim of Wickedness ; as the Exemplar of Religion ; as the Deserter of Heaven, and as the Power of God. Our vision is too dim to see a thousandth part of what there is to be seen, and what one day will be discovered in this wonderful scene ; and even our limited views are given in forms the most sketchy, in order to suggest to others things we have failed to see. Let us keep our eyes upon this scene, It is the scene for us ; the scene we want. Let the cross ever be the most commanding object in our mental horizon. From it may we draw our doctrines of theology and our code of duty ! Under its living radiance may we live and labor ; there may we die and rise to the retributions of eternity !

"The cross ! it takes our guilt away ;
 It holds the fainting spirit up ;
 It cheers with hope the gloomy day,
 And sweetens every bitter cup ;
 It makes the coward spirit brave,
 And 'nerves the feeble arm for fight ;
 It takes the terror from the grave,
 And gilds the bed of death with light.
 The balm of life, the cure of woe,
 The measure and the pledge of love,
 The sinner's refuge here below,
 The angel's theme in heaven above." *



Germs of Thought.

SUBJECT :—*The Redeemed in Heaven.*

"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands : and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."—Rev. vii. 9—11.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Twelfth.

IN these verses, and in the context, we have the account of a vision which John the Evangelist had when he was a prisoner in Patmos. Banished thither for his testimony to Jesus, he was favored with peculiar manifestations of the Divine lovingkindness. Revelations were made to

* This article closes our observations on Matthew. The few verses and paragraphs which we have not noticed under the heading *Genius of the Gospel*, will be found developed elsewhere in other parts of the "Homilist." A reference to the index will show this. As the ACTS OF THE APOSTLES naturally succeeds the Gospel, and as it is charged, we believe, with glorious truths yet to be unfolded, we shall, if life be spared, proceed to the exposition of that portion of the Holy Record. We shall also give occasional sketches of THE REVELATIONS OF ST. JOHN.

him which were to be for the comfort and the guidance of the Church of Christ, throughout succeeding ages, up to the return of our Lord.

In this passage we have a glimpse of the heavenly world. There is a partial drawing aside of the curtain which conceals from our view the condition and happiness of the redeemed, and we are permitted to look within the veil and behold their blessedness. There cannot be a more beautiful or more sublime description of the glories of the future state. It is a heavenly scene and not an earthly one. The unseen world is presented to our view; we have something higher and better, brighter and nobler, than what we can find below the skies; and by meditating upon it, we may be encouraged in our Christian conflict. Observe :—

I. THE GREAT NUMBER OF THE REDEEMED. “A great multitude, which no man could number.” This is a form of expression which implies that in heaven there will be a number far exceeding our utmost conceptions. Heaven will be peopled with an innumerable throng; its many mansions will be all occupied. Christ will be glorified in the salvation of a countless multitude. We are aware that upon earth the flock of Christ appears to be small, and numerically insignificant. To how small a proportion of mankind is the Gospel even preached! over what an overwhelming majority does the god of this world still exercise his evil dominion! Even were we to reckon all who make a profession of Christianity as true disciples, the number of Christ’s flock as compared with the whole world, would be numerically insignificant. But how much more is this the case when we make the necessary deductions, on the ground of the tares that grow along with the wheat; of the false professors that are mingled with the true; of the multitudes who have the shadow, with none of the real substance, of Christianity. Let it be granted, however, that at any one period of the world’s history, or in any one section of the Church of Christ, the flock of the Redeemer is small—yet, when the whole

Church of the redeemed shall be gathered together in the last day, it will be a countless throng which no man can number. It will form a great multitude, countless as the stars of the sky, or the sands of the sea-shore. It is in the highest degree probable that the number of the redeemed will finally exceed the number of the lost. For consider :—

First : *The vast number of children that die.* By the term children, we include all who have not arrived at the age of accountability. It has been calculated by persons well qualified to make the calculation, that nearly one-half of the children which are born, die before they arrive at the age of accountability—that is, they die before it is possible for them to feel their responsibility in the sight of God. And if such a multitude die before the commission of actual sin, may they not be saved without actual faith in Christ? All children who die before the commission of sin, are admitted into the heavenly world through the atonement of Christ, and there they will increase in intellectual, moral, and spiritual power, through the ages of eternity. Consider :—

Secondly : *The predictions of Scripture, that a time is coming when the whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord.* The condition of the world is not to continue as it is, in reference to the spread of the Gospel. There is a delightful period coming on with haste, when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The desert is to “rejoice and blossom as the rose,” the dark places of the earth are to be “enlightened with the truth,” and the habitations of cruelty are to “become the abodes of harmony and love.” Now, when this period arrives, this delightful period when Christ shall reign—the glorious millenium—during this long period, when all shall be on the side of Christ, when every knee shall bow to Jesus—what a vast number will pass into the heavenly world! Consider :—

Thirdly : *That Jesus Christ is represented as ultimately to be a conqueror.* He is to be triumphant over all His foes. He came purposely to destroy the works of the devil. Now, if

Christ has not ultimately a greater number on His side than Satan, He will evidently have not conquered. But Christ is to conquer and trample all his foes under His feet. Observe :—

II. THE EXTENSIVE VARIETY OF THE REDEEMED. “Of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues.” It is a pleasing thought that there will be no national, social, or denominational favoritism or exclusiveness in connexion with the society of heaven. God has had a people in every age of the world, in every clime, and amongst every kindred. They have been, indeed, often hidden from the eye of man, like the seven thousand that bowed not the knee to Baal. They have often been unobserved and unknown on earth, yet recorded in the Lamb’s Book of Life ; subject in time to the gracious influences of the Divine Spirit ; recipients of grace on earth, heirs of glory in heaven. It is to be greatly deplored that on earth, nation rises up against nation, and people wage war against people, and that their aim often is to destroy each other. It is also to be deeply lamented that the spirit of denominational exclusiveness and bigotry should so much prevail, that many who profess to be following the cross of Christ, should seem to take delight in excluding one another from the heavenly world. But thanks be to God, He hath made of one blood all nations of men, and there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek ; and whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. In heaven there will be Christians from every class, kindred, and denomination ; from every country and from every clime ;

“From Greenland’s icy mountains,
From India’s coral strand ;”

from Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. Every geographical barrier which now separates people from people will be swept away ; every national antipathy will be extinguished, and every denominational peculiarity will be at an end. Observe :—

III. THE BEAUTIFUL APPEARANCE OF THE REDEEMED. “Clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.” The

redeemed in heaven are frequently represented as being arrayed in white robes. "And white robes were given unto every one of them." "Who are these that are arrayed in white robes?" Although gathered out of every kindred, and from every nation, one dress distinguished them all. They were all arrayed in the same attire; they were all clothed with the same spotless raiment. The white robe is an emblem of the *moral purity* which characterizes the redeemed in heaven. Once admitted to the presence of God, they are wholly without fault; "they are without fault before the throne." Christ has presented them faultless before the throne with exceeding joy. In the context we are informed how they made their robes white—how they obtained their moral purity. One of the elders in heaven is represented as saying, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Tribulation on earth is the training school for glory in heaven. Those whom God is preparing for immortality, He commonly disciplines in the furnace of affliction. Tribulation, however, has no property in itself to entitle its subject to future glory, or to qualify him for its enjoyments. "Therefore," it is added, "they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Faith in Christ is the grand and the only specific for moral purification. Its efficacy is the same for men of all generations, and of all climes. The same declaration will hold good of all those who shall finally participate in the glories of heaven, "they have washed their robes and made them white;" not in the fires of a supposed purgatory, but in the blood of the Lamb which cleanseth from all sin. And therefore are they before the throne of God. The effulgent light which emanates from thence, discovers no stain or defect in them. They reflect, without imperfection, the image of God. It is added, "They had palms in their hands." The palm is the universal emblem of triumph. When a general had succeeded in conquering the enemies of his country, upon his return

they formed a procession to his honor, and waved the palm amid the plaudits of the multitude. And in heaven there are palms figuratively, indicating that the Christian is victorious. And the triumph of the believer in heaven will be complete ; he will then have trampled under foot every foe. No adversary shall ever again assail him ; no temptation shall disturb him evermore. Whatever may have hindered his peace, or interrupted his spiritual progress upon earth, shall have been for ever left behind. A triumph, full and complete, as that of the Lord Jesus Himself, will be the everlasting portion of every believer. Observe :—

IV. THE DELIGHTFUL SONG OF THE REDEEMED. “And cried with a loud voice,” &c. The whole company of the redeemed will join in the song, “Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.” What a roll of music will that be ! What harmony will burst from the lips of the innumerable multitude, when every voice is tuned to swell the anthem and join the chorus ! They will sing of “salvation”—not of creation, nor of Providence, but of “salvation.” It is highly probable that the redeemed in their glorified condition will know far more than it has ever been permitted to man upon earth to know, of the wonders of creation. The glories of God as displayed in the works of His hand, will furnish the occasion of growing wonder and delight. Then, too, we believe that mysteries of Providence will be disclosed ; the dark things as well as the perplexing, which have often caused anxiety to the believer in his earthly course, will be abundantly cleared up ; till, upon the review of all God’s dealings in Providence, the exclamation will break forth, “great and marvellous are thy works, just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.” And yet, glorious as will be the discoveries that God will afford of His works in creation, and of His ways in providence, it will still be “salvation” that will be the key-note of rejoicing to the Church triumphant. It will be this that will, in heaven even as now upon earth, fill with rapture the hearts of the saints.

and call from their lips the loudest utterance of praise. Everything which once excited their attention, and roused their ambition, will be entirely forgotten, and this one theme of "salvation" will be the great theme of their praise. And who will be the objects of their praise? They will praise God and the Lamb. They will ascribe all the honor of their salvation to the grace of God. We are saved by grace? And when the Christian arrives in the heavenly world, he will very gladly sing the song that his salvation is by grace. But they will praise the Lamb too. "Salvation unto the Lamb." They know that it is through Christ that they are saved—that it is through His atonement that they were accepted of the Father; and they will ascribe, by their song, honor and glory unto the Lamb.

My brethren, will you form part of that beautiful and happy throng? Will you join in the delightful song of the redeemed? If you ever do, you must learn that song on earth. Do you wish and hope to go to heaven? On what are your wishes and hopes founded? There is only one way to heaven. It is having your robes washed white in the blood of the Lamb. You must be justified by faith in Christ, and sanctified by His holy Spirit, ere you can be meet to stand before the throne.

CHARLES HARGREAVES.



SUBJECT:—*A Fertilized Church.*

"I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily," &c.—
Hos. xiv. 5, 6, 7.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Thirteenth.

THE heat of day dissolves into vapour the moisture of the ground. The chills of night condense that vapour, and it descends, silently, on the parched lips of vegetation. Those drops of condensed vapour are dew. In England, so

cold and damp is our climate, that we are ill qualified to discern the *beauty* of dew, or to appreciate its *worth*. Yet even in island England we do so to some extent. Beautiful it is to watch it, at early morn, pouring across a landscape, filling up valleys; rolling over hedge-rows, and leaving every leaf and blossom festooned with a string of pearls. It is beautiful, when lying, like liquid hoar frost, on the flowers of balmy meadows—or shaken from the skylark's wing, like salt spray from the wings of the ocean swan—or standing, like a diamond tear-drop, in the eye of some enamelled flower—and exhibiting God's mode of quenching the thirst of vegetation. Yet in England the earth *might* yield her increase without dew. Not so in Eastern countries. There, frequently during three months, the sky is cloudless. Hence, if no dew, no waving corn fields—olive groves—trellised vines—and Lebanon would be robbed alike of its patriarchal cedars and its perfumed lilies. Dew is their meat and drink—as necessary as air to man—literally, the blood that permeates through their forms. God promised to be as dew to His chosen people. He was so. Their entire history proves it:—He was the beauty of their character—their strength in battle—the wisdom of their counsels—the giver of food, &c. —“as the dew.” But it is of modern Israel that we would speak. The Jewish Church was the antitype of the prophet's watered landscape. The Christian Church is the antitype of both. The God of nature and of Israel is also the God of the Christian. He is as dew to His people now *by the operations of the Holy Spirit*. Dew is a type of spiritual influence because—(1) *It is essential*. Nature provides no substitute. (2) *Its operations are mysterious*;—unlike rain. (3) *Its workings are silent*. It is one of God's many quiet workers. (4) *Its influence is beautifying*. It feeds flowers. (5) *And fertilizing*. No drink of vegetation is more grateful. Such is the relationship of God, by His Spirit, to His people. “He is as dew, &c.”

I. THE GROWTH OF A GOD-WATERED CHURCH. “He shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon.” In

nature, *stability* is never reached *rapidly*. Strength is always crowned with hoary years. Quick growth never produces it. The succulent plant that leaps to maturity, is killed by the first frost; the forest tree, which no storms can kill, has been developing for a hundred years. This law affects also the works of man. A new kingdom (Italy) is feeble: an old one, (Britain) strong. The tent, erected in an hour, is destroyed by the blast in a moment; the cathedral, which cost years of toil, has knelled from its weather-beaten belfry the death of centuries, and still throws its unimpaired shadow on the homes of men. In the growth of a God-watered Church, we have a beautiful exception to this law of nature. In it the peculiarities of the lily and the cedar are blended. It has *beauty that is not fragile*. It has *strength that is not of tedious growth*. In the cemetery at Stirling stands the statue of young Renwick, the martyr-covenanter. In years he was a boy; in principle more than a man. A beardless youth may be a Christian giant. The child may outstrip the hoary pilgrim. The *individual* Christian may be at once a lily and a cedar. The Church of Jesus during its cradle life, was in jeopardy—its name a bye word, its worship forbidden—no lily ever seemed more frail. But was it not as strong as the Church of our day? Was it not stronger? A world's power could not slay it. A *Church* may be at once a lily and a cedar. As individuals—as Churches—let us seek to be the subjects of this exception to nature's law. We may have a religious life of excitement, and mere feeling, that will give the beauty of the lily—and also its frailness. We may, by moving monotonously in a narrow circle of religious routine, be clothed with the strength of the cedar—but it will be a slow and tedious growth. There is “a more excellent way”—a way to obtain stability and beauty, at once. How? By drinking of the dew—the spirit—which descends on the vineyard of our God. Let us do so, and do it at once.

II. THE POWER OF A GOD-WATERED CHURCH. “His branches shall spread, &c.” Preachers often say that but two

classes of persons inhabit earth—the saved and the unsaved. With such a division we cannot quarrel. But, in dividing amongst the unsaved, lines are employed that are not parallel. Some say all sinners are either *moralists*, or *profligates*; others say all are *disbelievers*, or *neglecters*: and others that all who sin, sin through *ignorance*, or *wilfulness*. There is another line of demarcation, equally natural:—all the unsaved have either *never known* God or have *apostatized from* Him. This division is suggested by the text, for it indicates that a watered Church has power with both classes.

First: *A God-watered Church has power with the world at large.* “His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon.” (1) This power is the *power of Law*. “His branches shall spread.” Mark that giant tree. How far-reaching are his brawny arms. He is a patriarch of the forest, a king, a sage. Ponder the development of that tree. His branches are longer, his bole stronger this year than they were last. By what power? Vital force in the root? Fructifying qualities in the sap? Truly so; but what qualifies the root for its office and the sap for its mission? Is it not *law*, immutable as gravitation, strong as God? *One man* can hew off a branch, and thus thwart the operations of the law, in one detail. *All men* cannot reverse the law itself. It is of God. If it could be reversed, He could be conquered. There are other laws—equally Divine—which are still more worthy of thought, because they more deeply and permanently affect our welfare. *One* is this: that all who crave for and ask for the influences of the Holy Spirit, obtain them—they drink of the dew. *A second* is this: the Holy Spirit enclusters the heart with good feelings, and crowds the life with “good works”—the dew gives verdancy and fragrance. *A third* is this: the goodness to which the Holy Spirit prompts, preaches effectual sermons to neglecters of God; dew-fed verdure possesses resistless attractiveness. It is by the associated operations of these laws, that the branches of the Church spread; from year to year its beauty and bulk may thus be increased. Thank God for the stability of His laws!

They operate for us. As surely as that seasons come and go, or that trees grow, and flowers emit perfume, will our Churches flourish if we honor the laws of God. (2) This power is the *power of Loveliness*: "his beauty shall be as the olive." There is in the world much of the beautiful, which one-half of its inhabitants refuse to gaze on. If they gazed, they could not appreciate. What is beautiful to some, is repulsive to others. One thing is beautiful to all, at all times, in all its respects. Goodness, humanity, likeness to Christ, is lovely to all eyes. A Church, eminently good, is eminently strong. It is like the olive: (1) *An evergreen*. (2) *Clothed with blossoms, white and fragrant*. (3) *Exhibiting precious fruits*. It commends Christianity to the world; commends, not so much an individual, not so much an isolated Church, as a universal blessedness. Some Churches have not this power. They are verdant, but not evergreen; or wood, without foliage; or foliage, without fruit. That men may possess the attractive beauty of the olive, let us ask for the dew. (3) This power is the *power of Love*. "His smell as Lebanon." Beauty may be very cold. The beauty of mere forms and theories is so. It is the beauty of the lily apart from its perfume, pleasing the eye without enrapturing the heart. Such is the power of some Churches; they are followers of James rather than John; they boast puritanic austerity, yet lack Christlike sympathy; they work but do not weep; they have the angular frame but not the picture—they have the rigidity of the cedar, not the fragrant vines that festoon its branches. Such Churches lack a main element of power. The strength of a strong Church is love. It has a warm heart as well as a beautiful countenance. It is not a mere statue; it lives, breathes, feels, speaks; and the burden of its speech is, "I beseech you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." Form is its muscle: love is its nerve. Such a Church cannot fail to exert a benign influence on the world. Its condition ensures its success. Its condition is dependent on the dew. Therefore, let us seek to have the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit given unto us.

Secondly: *A God-watered Church has power with relapsed Christians.* "They that dwell under his shadow, &c." I never knew a garden that had not a sickly plant in it; one that drooped, or was blighted, or that needed shielding with a glass. I never knew a Church without a sickly member in it; one that drooped, &c.—one that dwelt "under his shadow." When the Divine dew descends, these fading flowers start into "newness of life;" stimulated, inwardly, by the dew; outwardly, by the activity of others. (1) They "revive as the corn," from apparent death. (2) They "grow as the vine," rapidly. (3) And their growth is towards the fragrance of mature Christian life, holiness and love. Think not harshly of the poor sickly plant. Pharisees do so, and worldlings laugh at it. Jesus does not. Jesus looks on it, not as a weed, but as a flower to be more tenderly cherished—a vine to be more carefully pruned. Better than to frown is to pray that the dew may descend and moisten this parched soul. Of this be sure, that in the watering thou wilt be watered. In application, I ask (1) Is thy heart bedewed? I hope it is. (2) Hast thou a craving still unsatisfied? Ask. (3) Art thou in entire ignorance of Divine dew? Thou art culpable. (4) Art thou a sickly plant? Wait not for the Church to help thee. Help thyself. Pray.

J. K. JACKSON.

SUBJECT:—*Moral Insensibility of Sinners.**

"And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."—Matt. xiii. 14. 15.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Fourteenth.

OUR subject is the sinner's spiritual *insensibility*; and the text leads us to consider its figurative representation, its universal symptoms, and its grand discoverer.

* For an explanation of the context, see Vol. VII., p. 161.

I. ITS FIGURATIVE REPRESENTATION. "This people's heart is waxed gross." In Isaiah, the word, "fat" is applied to the heart instead of "gross." Fat,—the most unfeeling and encumbering part of the animal creature; a man distinguished by grossness and fatness is dull, heavy, unimpressible. *Insensibility* is the idea. The Bible represents the sinner as having a hardened heart, a stony heart, &c.; and represents him morally as being asleep, dead, sometimes "twice dead." The moral heart of the sinner is so fat with pride, selfishness, carnality and worldliness, that it is almost "past feeling." The moral nerves are buried in the "fat." This moral insensibility is: (1) *Criminal*. It is not the normal condition of the soul; it is the result of a sinful course. Is (2) *Dangerous*. It is a moral disease of the most alarming character. Is (3) *Temporary*. It will not continue for ever. The heart must one day be quickened, either by the convictions of the Gospel, or by the flash of retribution.

II. ITS UNIVERSAL SYMPTOMS. "By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand," &c. (1) *Want of spiritual understanding*. They hear the law and the Gospel; hear the echoes of Sinai and of Calvary, but they do not understand the spiritual import. All that the most powerful sermons do, is to ring on the hearing nerve, and then die away in sound. There is no understanding. The condition of the soul is too dull and heavy, too "fat," to put forth any effort to penetrate the Divine meaning of what is heard. It recoils from thinking on religious subjects in a religious way. (2) *Want of spiritual perception*. "Seeing ye shall see, and not perceive." Pictures of Divine things, both in nature and in the Bible, are brought close to the eye of sense, and yet the soul sees them not. Rational statements of Divine things are brought close to the eye of understanding, and yet the soul perceives them not. The spiritual eye is full of evil, and all is dark within. The soul can only see in the object what it brings to it, and as it has not the Divine spirit of things in it, it sees not the Divine in outward objects. A thick haze of sensuousness and sin, hides the spiritual from the soul's eye.

III. ITS GRAND DISCOVERER. "In them is fulfilled." Or, *is being* fulfilled, is now in the course of illustration, what the old prophets said. It is here taught that the great discoverer of the moral insensibility of the sinner is the teaching of Christ. The life and teaching of Christ have brought out to the view of the universe, in aspects of hugest hideousness, the moral insensibility of the sinner's soul. Take the conduct of the Jewish nation, or rather the Sanhedrim, as the representative of that nation in relation to Christ, as exhibiting the hardness of the human soul. The members of that Jewish council had, by the teaching and life of Christ, the Divinest things brought in the most powerful way to their ears, and in the most commanding form to their eyes, and yet they understood not, neither did they perceive. They witnessed His miracles, they heard His sermons ; they knew the unearthly tenor of His life, and yet they were so blind and hard, that they went on, in the face of all, to crucify Him. More, they witnessed the wonders of His crucifixion ; they were convinced of His resurrection. The wonders of the Pentecost must have assured them that He was gone to heaven ; and yet, blind and hardened, they continued to persecute, even unto death, the disciples who advocated His cause. Truly this child was set for the rise and fall of many in Israel, *and the thoughts of many hearts were revealed by Him*. Christ revealed the moral heart of His age, and His Gospel ever since discovers the awfully hardened condition of man. Man's awful moral insensibility is seen in two ways. (1) *In his opposition to the Gospel*. His infidel calumnies and his bloody persecutions, &c., show this. (2) *In his indifference to the Gospel*. The fact that millions upon millions hear the Gospel and see it, and yet have no vital sympathy with it, is an awful illustration of the fact that "the people's heart is waxed gross." Oh, haste the day when the Gospel trump shall not only be heard throughout the land, but when its blasts shall grow so loud and startling, as to reach the dumbest ear, and rouse into living action the dumbest soul !

SUBJECT :—*Religion a River.*

“As rivers of water in a dry place.”—Isaiah xxxii. 2.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Fiftenth.

THIS chapter is a prophetic photogram of a bright age that awaits this world. Amongst other features of the happy era here delineated, is that of rivers flowing through “dry places.” The dry places are unregenerated souls—souls scorched with the drought of sin, dusty and leafless, without any vestige of spiritual life or verdure. Without figure—a soul unrenewed by heavenly influence, is, in a moral sense, “a dry place,” barren and unfruitful. What is the river that is to run through it, irrigate its barren districts, clothe it with living beauty, and enrich it with fruit? It is Christ’s religion, godliness. Let the river then stand, not for objective Christianity, but for Christianity in the soul, for experimental godliness; and we have four ideas suggested concerning it—*Vitality, Motion, Emanancy, and Progress.*

I. **VITALITY.** So necessarily do we associate life with a river, that the ancients traced the universe to water as the first principle of all things. Where there is water, there is life. Life, in all its forms, follows in profusion the meandering course of rivers. Even all the races of men crowd to their banks and settle on their shores. The Euphrates made Babylon; the Tiber made Rome; and the Thames makes London. Water is life. “Everything shall live whither the river cometh.” Religion, which, in one word, is *supreme love to God in the soul*, is life; it quickens, develops, and brings to fruition all the powers of our spiritual nature. Intellect, imagination, conscience, the affections, all are made to live and grow where religion is. “He that believeth on me,” said Christ, “out of him shall flow rivers of living water.” His words are spirit and life.

II. **MOTION.** The river is not like the torpid pool or the stagnant lake, resting in the quiet of death. It is active;

essentially and perpetually active. Mark it as a little rill, gushing from the infinite solitudes of some mountain, a thousand leagues away from the great parent ocean, and trace it in all its windings and growth, until you observe it bearing on its bosom the navy and commerce of nations, and you will not find it pause one moment in its career. There is a restless pulse of action in every particle. So with real godliness in the soul. It is in perpetual flow; it keeps all the powers of the soul in action. Thought is ever at work, gathering elements to feed the fires of devotion, and brighten the lamp of duty. The spirit is always abounding in the work of the Lord. A sleepy-souled saint is a contradiction. *A godly soul has an immense work to do, and the strongest impulses for doing it.*

III. EMANANCY. A river is an outflow—it has a fountain-head somewhere. It has no independent existence; there is a force that started it at first and feeds it every hour. A river is an *emanation*; so is true godliness in the soul. It did not originate there; it is not a fountain, but a river.

First: *There is a Divine fountain from which it emanated.* What is its primal font? THE LOVE OF GOD. This fountain lies far back in the awful depths of eternity—at the root of the universe. There is nothing beyond it. “God so loved the world,” &c.

Secondly: *There is a Divine channel through which it flowed.* What was the channel? CHRIST. His mission to this earth, His mediatorial work, His Gospel, constitute the channel through which God’s love flows to man. It is a wonderful channel. It was devised by the Infinite intellect in the past eternity; it took ages to prepare the world for it—and Christ’s existence and sacrifice constituted it.

Thirdly: *There was a Divine agent to let it into the heart.* Redemptive love rolls in majestic streams by every heart in Christendom. But how is the river to be let into the individual soul? That soul, through depravity, is so encased

by granite rocks of corruption, that unless some almighty hand is employed to work a way for its flow, it will never enter. The Spirit of God does this—does this, however, in connexion with means.

IV. PROGRESS. In a river there is twofold progress.

First: *Progress in its volume.* As the river meanders on its way, it grows in bulk by the contributory streams that flow into it. At length it gets force enough to sweep everything before it, and to give a character to the district. So with godliness in the soul. Holy currents of thought, sympathy, and purpose, deepen their channels and rise in the strength and majesty of their flow, as years and ages pass on. Religion is a growth.

Secondly: *Progress towards its destination.* See the river. It is moving somewhere, but whither? Will it rest in that deep valley which we descry in the distance? Will it sleep amidst those hills so remote that they seem like clouds in the horizon? No! farther on, and still farther on must it go—it is bound for the ocean. It started at first for the ocean, and for the ocean it has proceeded every hour for thousands of miles; and, like a loving, homeward-bound child, it will not pause until it feels itself locked in its mother's arms. So with the godly soul. Godward it ever moves. "Whom have I in heaven but thee," &c. God is the ocean to all the rivers of a good man's soul.

Is the river flowing through thee, my brother? or art thou lying like a motionless log of timber on its banks? If it is flowing through thee, thy soul is living—living in all that is true and holy. If so, adore the Infinite Father for it; it is an emanation from His eternal love. If so, devoutly rejoice in the grandeur that awaits thee. Thou hast read of a purling brook, growing until it watered a continent and fed an ocean. Far greater things await thee! Beyond thy mortal horizon there rolls in awful grandeur for thee—the ocean of infinite intelligence and love.

If that river has not flowed into thee, make an opening

for it at once and let in the living stream. Act like the men of Egypt in relation to the Nile. The Nile rolls through the heart of Egypt, and on its waters Egypt's life depends. Its periodical overflowings do the work of fertilizing showers, which seldom visit that land. The Egyptian husbandman, to turn that river to his own special account, cuts channels in his land, that the living water may remain when the river has subsided. Act thus, my friend, with that river of Divine life that rolls by thee, in all the redemptive means of grace, ere it—like the water of the flowing Nile—subsides. Cut, now, “by repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ,” a channel into thy heart for its soul-quickenings waters to flow in.



SUBJECT :—*The Greatness of Human Nature.*

How much, then, is a man better than a sheep?—Matt. xii. 12.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Sixteenth.

CHRIST has been defending the conduct of His disciples in regard to the Sabbath. There is a man present with a withered hand. The Pharisees ask Jesus if it is lawful to heal on the Sabbath, that they may have some ground on which to accuse Him of breaking the law. By a very striking illustration, He lays down the best reason for His exercise of miraculous power. He thus effectually shuts their mouths, and delivers Himself from the snare which they had set for Him. The argument of the text is drawn from the less to the greater. It is cumulative in force, and irresistible in conclusion. It appeals at once to their sense of right and self-interest. It is an argument both of comparison and contrast ; though the contrast is its most obvious and telling feature. It supplies us with some important thoughts and very practical lessons. Its question can only be answered approximately. *A man is better than a sheep in proportion to the superior excellence of his nature and*

the higher purpose which he serves in creation. The value of anything depends upon its intrinsic worth and usefulness. A sheep is both valuable and useful to its owner. It is valuable in itself as a creature capable of enjoying pleasure and forming a link in the chain of creation. It is useful because of the various purposes which it serves in its own sphere of existence. In comparison with man, these, in many respects, are very humble; through he possesses many qualities and serves many ends, in common with the sheep.

First: *Man is an intelligent being.* He is thus adapted and related to a wider range of objects, than the brutes. He can *think* and *know* something about, and draw enjoyment from, almost everything around him. He can reason and speculate; he can abstract and generalize. In thought he can transcend the limits of time and sense. *He* can pierce the unseen future, and contemplate the realities of eternity. *Their* circle of objects is extremely narrow, and their pleasures very limited—are confined to the senses and the present hour. *They* cannot anticipate the pleasures of the future.

Secondly: *Man is a moral being.* This increases his worth in the scale of existence. He has a *conscience*, and self-determining power of *will*. Sheep know no higher law and obey no other argument, than the blind and dumb motions of instinct. *They* yield to no motives superior to those which sensation supplies. *He* can make all the appeals of the senses, and all the motives which he has in common with the sheep, submit to the appeals of self-interest, and the nobler motives of moral rectitude—to conscience and to God. He can control his animal desires by the ideas of his mind. Passion hurries brutes irresistibly to action. He can command and subdue his passions by the exercise of reflection and judgment. He can *will to do*; and he *can do* the right and the wrong. His intellectual and moral nature constitutes him *a spiritual being*; and as such he can love and serve; he can worship, and hold fellowship with God. This is the crown of his perfection as chief of God's works. This makes him infinitely superior to brutes.

Thirdly : *Man is a being of limitless duration.* His thoughts and aspirations transcend the *present*, because he is an heir of the *termless future*. His capacities and powers are capable of infinite development. They need an endless life, and an infinite variety of objects to satisfy them, and to lead him on in eternal progress toward infinite perfection. The life of brutes is limited, because their faculties and capacities are limited. Man is immortal. "Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?" Man's "spirit returns unto God who gave it." All this proclaims "how much a man is better than a sheep."

I. THE SUPERIOR EXCELLENCE OF MAN'S NATURE DEMANDS THAT HIS LIFE SHOULD BE NOBLER THAN A SHEEP'S.

First : *God's design in the existence of His creatures, is, that their actions, or outward life, should be in harmony with the constitution or nature which He has given them.* Their inward and outward life should be a unity. A sheep fulfils the purpose of its being. It lives in harmony with the laws of its nature. It cannot do wrong. Man should willingly seek to fulfil a nobler purpose than that which sheep fulfil by mere instinct. He ought to live in harmony with the laws of his spiritual nature, and with the revealed will of God. He was made to glorify God in all his works and ways.

Secondly : *Learn here how unnatural and degraded is a state of sin.* Man, as a sinner, is out of harmony with himself, and out of harmony with God. He is a jarring and dissonant thing amid the general harmony of the universe. Though he has been made in the image of God ; endowed with conscience, intellect, and will ; and constituted lord of creation — yet as a sinner, he does not fulfil the purpose of his being.

Thirdly : *Here we have the brutes rising in judgment to condemn men.* A sheep lives a nobler life than many a man in Christian Britain. Every man who is content to live in pleasure ; to live for himself ; to live in sin ; to live in neglect of Jesus Christ, who has come to raise him to newness

of life—is really more degraded than the beasts that perish. And of such a one we may well ask, how much is that man *worse* than a sheep?

II. THE SUPERIOR EXCELLENCE OF MAN'S NATURE GIVES HIM SUPERLATIVE CLAIMS ON OUR PHILANTHROPY.

First: *We are bound to ameliorate the condition of all the needy, the suffering, and the sad, as much as we can.* And this duty becomes more imperative in proportion to the worth and importance of its object. Because man is man, he has special claims on the sympathy and assistance of his fellows. We must seek to lessen the misery, and increase the happiness of our race. We must take Christ for our example in this matter, as His philanthropy is illustrated in the case before us.

Secondly: *We have here a plea for the highest style of philanthropy—seeking to save the souls of men.* Because man is a soul needing salvation, he has the highest, the most solemn and imperative claims on the help of all who can lead him to the only Saviour. Again, Christ is our example here. “The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” “He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” His love and His sacrifice are the best index to the worth of the human soul. He must have esteemed it as a pearl of inestimable value when He gave His own life as a ransom to save it from destruction. Christian men must imitate Christ in this great work, and count no sacrifice too great to rescue souls from sin and everlasting ruin.

Thirdly: *Works of mercy must not be confined to any special time or place.* It is the deed that makes the time and place sacred, not they that consecrate the deed. Man's necessities are urgent. Acts of lovingkindness are alway acceptable to God and blissful to man. All times and places are proper for them. Again, Christ is our example here, as in the case before us. Our opportunities of blessing and saving men are few and rapidly passing away, and they should therefore be eagerly improved.

R. KERR.

Biblical Exegesis.

Phil. ii. 5—11.

{ Τοῦτο γὰρ φρονείσθω ἐν ὑμῖν
ὁ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ·

{ ὅς ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ ὑπάρχων,
οὐχ ἄρπαγμόν ἡγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ

{ ἀλλ' ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσε
μορφὴν δούλου λαβὼν
ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος·

{ καὶ σχήματι εὑρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος
ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν
γενόμενος ὑπήκοός μεχρὶ θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ.

{ Διὸ καὶ ὁ Θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερέψωσε
καὶ ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ ὄνομα τὸ ὑπὲρ πᾶν ὄνομα·
ἵνα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ
πᾶν γόνυ κάμψῃ
ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων.
καὶ πᾶσα γλῶσσα ἐξομολογήσῃται
ὅτι Κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός.
εἰς δόξαν Θεοῦ Πατρὸς.

THE first phrase which claims our attention, for the understanding of this remarkable passage, is *μορφῇ Θεοῦ*. In Mark xvi. 12, with reference to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, it is said, “He appeared *in another form*, ἐν

ἑτέρα μορφή, unto two of them." In Luke we are told that "their eyes were holden, so that they did not know Him;" and afterwards, "their eyes were opened, and they knew Him." The one evangelist seems to make the difference objective, the other subjective. But in the Septuagint of Daniel, μορφή is used five times for *brightness*, especially of the countenance, iv. 36; v. 6; ix. 10; vii. 28. In Isaiah xlv. 13, it means *structure, build, figure*. Job iv. 16, *appearance*. Wisdom xviii. 1, *shape*.

The evangelists Matthew and Mark use the verb μεταμορφοῦσθαι to describe the change in the appearance of Jesus at the transfiguration, transformation, or metamorphosis: καὶ μετεμορφώθη. Luke says, τὸ εἶδος τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ ἕτερον, "the fashion of His countenance (became) different." His face shone like the sun, and His whole form flashed with light.

Suicer says, "*The form of God* signifies the nature or essence of God, but clothed as it were with His properties, namely, Divine glory and majesty." He quotes Theodoret, Theophylact, Chrysostom, and others to this effect. The moderns, as Bretschneider and Ebrard, understand the expression to signify *God's external majesty*. With this the above citations from the New Testament and the Septuagint seem the rather to agree. Yet, as it would seem impossible for any one but God Himself to be clothed with the Divine properties of glory and majesty, the expression, the *form of God*, while it directly indicates the properties, may indirectly suggest the essence.

For ὑπαρχων, see "Homilist" for January, 1861, p. 49, 50. "The verb denotes original state, natural character, primitive condition," and this sense, as distinguished from those of εἶναι and γίνεσθαι, the learned writer finds in about forty instances.

The next point is the meaning of ἀρπαγμός, which according to etymological law, which there seems no sufficient reason for supposing to be violated here—refers to the *act of seizing*, rather than to the *thing seized*. The word does not occur in the Septuagint. Yet, although we regard it as used actively, there is no necessity for adopting the ordinary interpretation, which, for this context, appears to be strained and almost unmeaning. What is *robbery*? Three things belong to it—injustice, force, and haste. Now what St. Paul says is not, we think, that Christ did not judge that His claiming

equality with God *could be called* forcible and hasteful injustice,—but, that He did not judge equality with God *to consist* in forcible and hasteful injustice,—but, *in the contrary*. The apostle's object is to debort the Philippians from strife, vain-glory and selfishness—all of which are connected with robbery—and to exhort them to lowliness of mind, esteem of others, and benevolence. See verses 3, 4. This he enforces by the example of Christ. Christ did not think strife, vain-glory, selfishness, or robbery, that is, injustice, force or fraud, and haste, to be Divine. He regarded their opposites as Divine. St. Paul says, Rom. i. 16, that he is *not ashamed* of the Gospel, which is a Hebraism, meaning that *he glories in it*. So here, that *Christ did not judge that Deity was robbery*, means that *He judged it to be the opposite*. Robbery is snatching that to which one has no right. *The opposite is the voluntary renunciation of that which properly belongs to us*. Christ judged that such renunciation was a Divine thing.

The οὐχ ἡγήσατο denotes a mental action of Christ which took place before the event described by αὐτὸν ἐκένωσε. The subject of thinking was τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ equality with God, in what it consisted, or what belonged to it. Τὸ εἶναι κ. τ. λ. is the logical subject, and ἀπαγμὸν is put predicatively. Compare Acts xvii. 29. “We ought not to think what is Divine to be like gold, &c., χρυσῷ . . . τὸ θεῖον εἶναι ὅμοιον.

ἀλλ' αὐτὸν ἐκένωσε. As the result of this judgment, He emptied Himself of the Divine condition and rank, of the Divine glory and majesty which belonged to the *form of God*.

The μορφή δούλου is the earthly condition of His human nature. He did not lay aside the Divine nature, but the Divine condition. What He assumed was the earthly condition of man, which He did “by becoming in the likeness of men.” Being originally ὑπάρχων, in the form of God, He becomes γενομενος, in the likeness of men. He is the same *Person* as before, but He has descended to a lower rank.

σχῆμα, figure, dress, condition. It occurs once beside in the New Testament, 1 Cor. vii. 31. “The *fashion* of this world passeth away.” It is used in the Septuagint in a peculiar sense for the Hebrew *poth*; there is evidently a near relationship, if not an exact synonymy between the words μορφή, ὁμοίωμα and σχῆμα.

ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτόν. This is the second step of His self-abnegation. The first, *He emptied Himself*; the second, *He lowered Himself*. First, He descended to an inferior condition; then in that condition, He suffered as if He had been a transgressor. The apostle exhorts to ταπεινοφροσύνη lowliness of mind, verse 3, which he recommends by Christ's example, who made Himself low by becoming obedient unto death, even death by the cross.

Now begins the second part of the passage, which shews how Christ's judgment concerning τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ was confirmed by the conduct of the Father. Christ having been found able to empty and then lower Himself to the utmost, is exalted to a Divine condition. The two steps of His self-abnegation are both reversed in the ὑπερύψωσε. Observe the ὑπερ. He is not merely justified, but is raised in *human nature* beyond the rank of servitude to heavenly majesty and glory. He receives back the form of God, having obtained it not by robbery, but as the reward of merit. ὄνομα τὸ ὑπὲρ κ. τ. λ. is the name *Jehovah*, κύριος in the Septuagint and the New Testament. This name is distinctly assigned Him in ver. 11. Compare Psalm lxxxiii. 18. πᾶν γόνυ κ. τ. λ. is from the Septuagint of Is. xlv. 23. Compare Rom. xiv. 11.

εἰς δόξαν Θεοῦ πατρὸς. Christ's self-exaltation was done with the Father's concurrence. His earthly obedience was obedience to the Father. His exaltation was the Father's act. His history, therefore, in both respects, brings honor to the complete Godhead.

The apostle's subsequent exhortation (12—16) seems to confirm the view we have taken of the passage. He tells the Philippians to *work out* their own salvation by obedience; his point having been that Christ had *wrought out His heavenly glory*, not *snatched* at it. God had exalted Christ, and is now working in them for an analogous end by virtue of His good intention, which will not be aided but thwarted by disobedient and vain-glorious strife. They are therefore to avoid *murmurings* and *disputings*. Thus they will *become children of God*. Thus also in the day of Christ, that is, the day when the effects of Christ's exaltation shall be made apparent in the members of redeemed humanity, the apostle will rejoice at the success of his own efforts in leading them, as Christ's servant, on the path to redemption.

The following principles are taught in this passage :

(1) That merit, as well as majesty, belongs to Godhead, and that the one is fully equal to the other.

(2) This merit has been shewn in Christ's self-exinanition and obedient self-degradation.

(3) Christ's heavenly majesty and glory is the Father's stamp on the merit of His self-abnegation.

(4) Both Christ's meritorious self-abnegation and His consequent reward conduce to the honor of the entire Godhead.

(5) The spirit and conduct of Christ is not only the ground of our redemption, but also an example for our imitation. His history shews in what true greatness consists, and what is the path to final honor; which cannot be snatched by strife, force, fraud, injustice; but is the result of a long course of self-renunciation.

(6) Christ is *the same person* in all the three stages of His history—before the incarnation, during the humiliation, in exaltation. There are not two persons united, but one Divine Person in several conditions.

(7) Christ is by original nature equal with God; for a creature could neither have at first worn the form of God, nor have performed an act of self-abnegation sufficient to prove His Divine nature, nor finally have at last achieved Divine glory.

{ Let this way of thinking be in you,
 { which was even in Christ Jesus :

{ Who, being in the form of God at first,
 { judged not being equal with God to be robbery,

{ but emptied Himself
 { by taking the form of a servant,
 { by becoming in likeness of men :

{ and in guise having been found as man,
 { He lowered Himself
 { by becoming obedient unto death even death of cross.

Wherefore also God heightened Him exceedingly,
 and granted Him the name above every name ;
 that in the name of Jesus
 “every knee should bow,”
 of beings heavenly and on earth and under earth,
 “and every tongue confess ”
 that Jesus Christ is LORD
 to the glory of God the Father.

The Christian Year.

BY A CLERGYMAN.

Twelfth Sunday after Trinity.

“Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.”—2 Cor. iii. 6.

THE common translation of this passage conceals its connexion with the context. The apostle has just asked—in view of the stupendous significance of the ministry—“Who is *sufficient* for these things?” Again he says, “Not that we are *sufficient* of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our *sufficiency* is of God; who also hath made us *sufficient* as ministers of the New Testament.” The verb in the text is kindred with the preceding adjective and substantive.*

No less than three interpretations, worthy of notice, have been given of this passage. It is acknowledged by all that St. Paul calls the old covenant *the letter*, and the new *the spirit*, but there is a difference of opinion as to the sense in

* *ικανός, ικανότης, ικάνωσεν.*

which the one is said to “kill” and the other to “quicken.” Some think that he refers to the severity of the law, which annexed the doom of death to several transgressions besides that of murder, whereas the spirit of the Gospel is more merciful. It is evident, however, that the death intended is spiritual. And this death, according to some, is an effect of a *moral* cause, the inability of a mere command to produce obedience, and indeed the aptness of it rather to irritate perverse human nature to disobedience. Others, again, think that this death is the effect of an intellectual cause, the imperfection of a fixed verbal system as a vehicle of meaning, and the readiness with which it is perverted to a wrong meaning, or is bereft of all meaning, yet not the less fastens the uninformed mind in blind reverence and false contentment on the empty carcases of words. Rejecting the first interpretation as unsuitable to the connexion, we adopt, combine, and enlarge the other two. The mere letter of the Scripture, whether of the Old Testament or the New, is, both morally and intellectually, the occasion of spiritual death.

I.

The text teaches *the powerlessness of Divine commands alone to produce obedience.*

This does not prove any imperfection in the law; which, being Divine, is perfect. The failure of obedience is due to the imperfection of human nature, which does not yield to the obligation. The conscience, indeed, is on the law's side, but such is the strength of the lower nature, that the man is hurried by animal impulse to impurity, injustice, and ungodliness. Then, one of two things inevitably happens. Either the habitual failure of the conscience produces habitual unquietness and wretchedness, in a constant sense of discord between the opposed principles; a consciousness of powerlessness against evil, which may well be named death—or,

The law even becomes the occasion of sin. The appearance of prohibition provokes the lower nature and irritates it to

impatience of restraint. It rears like a restive beast. Now the consciousness of sin renders the man reckless, and to get rid of the uneasiness, the rider is thrown. The higher nature is slain, not strictly speaking by the law, but by the brute force of the lower rising in rebellion against the unwelcome control of authority. When conscience is thus overcome, loses dominion and ceases resistance, the man is given over to the license of self-will and undergoes moral death. Thus the law not only fails to produce obedience, it becomes the occasion of sin.

On the other hand, *the Spirit which characterizes Christianity has a quickening power.*

The law was inaugurated by the gift of ten precepts, constituting a perfect epitome of duty, and *written on stone* by God's finger. Christianity was inaugurated when Christ appeared in human form. Thus our nature received an immeasurable accession of spiritual strength ; for the Son of God, not only inevitably overcame temptation, but His victory was made exemplary for a regenerate humanity.

The Spirit of Christ quickens *by means of a perfect and most moving instance of obedience.* In the Old Testament we do not meet with any instance of perfect obedience—with any person whose example can be regarded as a living commentary on the law. Christ not only obeyed the law as it was intended to be obeyed, but *opened in it a new and sublimer meaning*, so that the imitation of Him is a new command. His example is not only thus perfect and transcendent, but *most affecting.* It is presented in a form most intimate and intelligible, and it is the example of One, who, in His very obedience, binds us to Himself by the tie of the tenderest and mightiest gratitude. And then, since Christ is God, and the revelation of the Father, the gratitude which He inspires becomes Divine love, and throws its full strength into obedience of the Divine commands.

The Spirit of Christ quickens *causatively, by a secret influence on the heart.* He is the Creator, and His noblest creative work is the moral regeneration of the human soul. He

renders the heart perceptive of the beauty of Christ's character, and sensitive of the proper impressions. Thus our higher nature receives an incalculable increase of power. Conscience is re-enthroned and governs, but the law is obeyed not so much because it is obligatory, as because it is loved. As often as the ever-returning weakness of nature requires aid, and application is made to the Source of strength, fresh life is imparted, until the lower nature becomes subjugate, and the spirit triumphant.

II.

The text teaches *the intellectual deficiency and mischievousness of mere writing as a means of instruction*. As a vehicle of meaning, writing is immeasurably inferior to a living presence. The correspondence of distant friends is but a poor comfort in their separation. The writing is often obscure, and is liable to misunderstanding. It is mute, and cannot be questioned and made to interpret itself. The letter lies before the reader as his sole available instructor to make of it what he can. When the writing is old, the truth of these statements becomes more obvious and emphatic. Every word requires study, and a translation only lessens the evil. If the writing in question is holy writing, the evil arising from ignorance or misunderstanding is augmented in proportion to the august position which it occupies, and the reverence which it inspires. To receive a falsehood as God's word, is intellectual and moral death.

Spiritual death is sometimes the effect of the letter of old theological system. Technical terms, invented by sectarian divines of former ages, and which not always corresponded to the truth even at first, are regarded by many with a reverence as great as are the words of Scripture, a reverence which is often innocent of their real sense. Thus modern ignorance is superinduced on old falsehood. There are congregations to whom a man may preach with living eloquence the very truths which kindled the zeal of St. Paul and St. John, but his audience, not hearing the familiar

dialect, are deaf to the music, blind to the glory, and dead to the spirit of the discourse. They did not expect and they cannot recognize truth in this guise. So, like the Jewish Scribes, they call for crucifixion. This is one of the saddest phenomena of modern religion.

Knowledge of the author, and sympathy with him, is indispensable to the understanding of his writings. Unless we had something in common with writers, not a line of the literature of the world would be intelligible. By the human spirit, common to all ages, we understand the writings of Greece and Rome ; but a higher than the spirit of man is necessary to the reading of Holy Scripture. If the author is accessible, and can be questioned as to his meaning, we are in a position of high advantage. St. Paul, resuscitated, would afford a better commentary on his own epistles, than can now be gathered from the collected labours of intervening generations.

The modern saying, that "the Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants," in its unqualified form, does Protestantism great injustice. If accepted at all, it must be accepted with the reservation that knowledge of the Bible's Author, and the inspiration of His Spirit, are necessary to the interpretation of it. St. Paul in our text does not speak of the Christian ministry as the trustee of a mere book, but as the dispenser of the Spirit. Moses came down from Sinai bearing the tables of the law ; the Christian apostle is the minister of an invisible Spirit. The Christian Church is a living organ of the Spirit, by which He is constantly communicated to men. The Christian man, and he only, is in a position to understand and live by the Scriptures. They come to him interpreted by the consenting piety of the past, and by the living voice of the ministry, and *to be* interpreted by the Living Spirit of Truth and Holiness, by whom he communes with God, and by whom he is inspired. Being thus in constant contact with the Spirit's breath, he is a constant recipient of moral and intellectual life.

What a noble view this gives us of the Christian ministry.

The apostle was "made sufficient as a minister" of the new dispensation of the Spirit. His sufficiency is not self-originated, but imparted; is from God Himself. It consists not in his own discoveries or opinions, not in knowledge of the letter of Scripture, but in the glad message he is commissioned to deliver, the ordinances he is commissioned to dispense, the promise of the Spirit to co-operate with his ministrations, the Spirit by whose living breath he is himself quickened, and whom he is the better fitted to minister unto others. The true minister is the organ of Divine life to the people. From him there "flow rivers of living water." He utters not his private interpretations of God's doings and decrees, but yields to the heavenly impulse. God grant to all ministers this sufficiency! Then shall there not be wanting living fruit of a living ministry, human hearts inscribed with the spiritual characters of truth and love, and human lives setting forth the same.

The Preacher's Finger-Post.

A LONG LIFE AND A HAPPY ONE.

"That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth."—Deut. xi. 21.

THESE words are part of a long and powerful discourse, which Moses addresses to the children of Israel, on the subject of practical religion. As the consequence of a practical development of the

principles he inculcates upon them, he promises them "a long and happy life." *A long life and a happy one*, is a formula by which we express the wish of our hearts for others. Such a life all men desire, and Moses here teaches us that such a life comes out of practical religion. The words suggest two observations.

I. That experimental godliness has a tendency to
ADD LENGTH OF DAYS TO

MAN'S LIFE. That genuine religion has a great tendency to promote longevity, will scarcely be questioned by any one, and is capable of demonstration. We say *genuine* religion, for there are religions which engender emotions, and stimulate conduct most pernicious to physical health. First : *Genuine religion engenders and fosters states of mind highly conducive to physical health.*

"A merry heart doth good like a medicine," saith Solomon. There are mental passions that are physical poison. Envy, malevolence, revenge, with all their selfish sisterhood. True religion excludes these, fills the heart with hope, joy, love, peace, &c. Secondly : *Genuine religion stimulates a practical regard to the laws of human health.* It leads to the study of those laws, as the revelation of the God it loves, and to obedience of those laws as the fulfilment of His will.*

II. That experimental godliness has a tendency to ADD HEAVEN TO A MAN'S LIFE. "As the days of heaven upon the earth." First : *It gives him the spirit of heaven.* What is the spirit of heaven? Love to God and goodwill to His universe; this is the inspiration of

* See "Homilist." New Series p. 467.

heaven; this is the key-note that rules all its melodies; the sun that brightens, vivifies, and colors all its scenes. Secondly : *It engages in the service of heaven.* What are the employments of heaven? The study of truth, the worship and acts of social benevolence. True religion employs men in these occupations now. Thirdly : *It introduces into the fellowship of heaven.* What are the associations of heaven? God, Christ, angels, sainted men; but genuine religion introduces to these now. "We are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."

MORE THAN A CONQUEROR.

"We are more than conquerors through him that loved us."—Rom. viii. 37.

I. THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF MAN ON EARTH IS A BATTLE.

This is true of all men, whatever be their creed or character, whether they are godly or ungodly. There are two powers, laws, or elements, in every man's soul eternally antagonistic, and must battle until one or the other is destroyed—the *spiritual*, and the *carnal*; the former struggling ever for the absolutely right, and the other for the personally gratifying; the sentiments of right, and dictates of expediency. The instincts of the flesh and the intuitions of the soul are in a perpetual fight. There is, it is true, a great difference as to the conflict carried on in the breast of the godly and the ungodly, and the difference is mainly this, that in the case of the ungodly, the *spiritual* is the weaker. Selfishness and passions struggle to keep the conscience down; whereas, in the case of the godly, the *spiritual* is the stronger, and the struggle of the higher nature is, to bring the dictates of self and the flesh into absolute subjection. The preceding chapter is a moral history of this conflict.

II. A CONQUEROR IN THIS BATTLE IS A GLORIOUS CHARACTER. He who conquers his passions, and subdues all the evil tendencies of his nature, is a hero in the highest sense. First: *He*

has developed some of the noblest attributes of the soul,—as courage, self-sacrifice, perseverance. It requires a far higher courage to battle on the unobserved arena of the soul, against the favorite lusts and gods of the depraved nature, than to face an army in the open field. Secondly: *He has pursued a course absolutely right.* The course of a material warrior, even in the most unexceptionable campaigns, admits of many solemn questions as to its rectitude; but he who battles against the wrong in his own heart, is engaged in a struggle of undoubted righteousness. Thirdly: *He has achieved a result entirely benevolent.* Even the most useful of the mere material wars have been mixed with immense evils; but in the case of this moral victory, nothing is destroyed but the destroyer, &c.

III. "MORE" GLORIOUS THAN THIS CONQUEROR IS THE CHRISTIAN. He is "more than a conqueror." (The apostle says, *ὑπερνικῶμεν*.) A man is a conqueror when he overcomes his enemy; he is more than this when he is a gainer by the conquest. First: *He has lost nothing in the conquest.* He might have been a conqueror and yet have lost

much by his battles. Indeed, most material conquerors have suffered great losses; if not a loss of property, a loss of friends; a loss, perhaps, of health; a loss of peace of mind. But a Christian conqueror has lost nothing. Secondly: *He has gained much by his conquest.*

(1) He has gained *power* by his conquest. He leaves it a stronger man than when he began. There is a tribe of savages whose warriors have the idea that the strength of the men they have killed flows into them by the fatal stroke. This has a reality in the moral conflict. Every moral enemy slain, gives the slayer strength. (2) He has gained *dominion* by his conquest. In material warfare a man may conquer, often does, and not become a king. Not so in this conflict; the Christian conqueror becomes the monarch of his own soul.

(3) He has gained *invincibility* by this conquest. In physical campaigns, conquerors have been conquered over again. Not so in this spiritual victory; the man who once conquers sin, becomes unconquerable for ever—he is kept by the power of God, &c.

IV. THE CHRISTIAN IS "MORE" GLORIOUS THAN A CONQUEROR THROUGH CHRIST.

"Through him that loved us."

Man could never have won the conquest had it not been for Christ. First: *Christ revealed the terribleness of the enemy.* The soul would not have known how terrible her spiritual enemies were, had it not been for the revelation of Christ. He has shown what sin is. Secondly: *Christ furnished the armor for the battle.* Paul gives a list of the weapons required. (Eph. vi. 14—18.) Christ has provided these. Thirdly: *Christ gave the inspiration for the engagement.* His love kindled the martial spirit in the sinner's soul, and roused him to the conflict. Fourthly: *Christ gave them the conquering power.* He made His strength perfect in their weakness. Thus their victory is through Christ, and the songs of eternity ascribe all spiritual conquests to His love.

THE GODLY SOUL.

"For in the time of trouble."—Psalm xxvii. 5.

LET the text suggest—as it is gathered from the whole Psalm:—

I. THE SPIRITUAL HISTORY OF A GODLY SOUL. First: *God speaks first to it.* "When thou said'st," &c. (1) In the education of home. (2)

In the ministration of the Word. (3) In the administration of His providence. Secondly: *The soul responds.* "My heart said, Thy face will I seek." (1) In private devotion. (2) In public confession (ver. 4), "One thing have" &c. (3) In life-long purpose. (Ps. cxvi. 1, 2.)

II. THE SPIRITUAL RELATION OF A GODLY SOUL. "*My God.*" This is one. First: *Of pure grace.* Would you wish it otherwise? *Love.* Does not this cover all your imperfections, and make all His resources yours. Secondly: *Of free access.* Thirdly: *Of exultant joy* (ver. 1 and 6). Fourthly: *Of eternal devotion.* "When my father," &c.

III. THE SPIRITUAL SECURITY OF A GODLY SOUL. Look at—First: *God's attitude.* Here He is a warrior against all evil, subduing all its forces. This is your defence, for evil is your only foe. (1) All His laws are against it. (2) His final administration is against it. (3) His Gospel is against it. Until God's laws, Gospel, final judgment—all fail, you are safe. Secondly: *God's care.* "His pavilion." The tent of the Commander-in-chief, the centre whence issue all orders, to which is taken all infor-

mation, the centre of intelligence, &c. *Here He hides* you, His child. Why? To show:—(1) That you are as safe as God is. (Ps. xlvii. 4, 8.) (2) That you shall not see what God sees. "Hide," "secret." It would frighten you. (3) That you may be soothed by Him amid the din of the battle. (vers. 13, 14.) "I had fainted," &c. (4) That you may share His triumph when the war is over. Here the Church is a tent, there a temple; here tumultuous war, there unbroken peace: here partial concealment, there perfect revelation. W. WHEELER.

THREE GREAT THINGS.

"Prepare to meet thy God."
—Amos iv. 12.

THESE are the emphatic words of God, and they remind us:

I. OF MAN'S GREATEST POSSESSION. "Thy God." When man is born into our world, he inherits vast possessions. The air is his, for he breathes it; the sun is his, for it makes his day; the sea is his, for it gives him drink. Spring breathes in balmy breath, summer scatters her flowers, autumn binds her sheaves, and winter rocks to sleep, in order that nature may burst out with fresher

beauty again for man ; but these sink into nothingness when we consider man's greatest possession ! God !! His spirit came from God. "There is a spirit in man," &c. "All souls are mine." It is sustained by God. It is returning to God. Saint or sinner, God is his God. Astonishing relationship, stupendous possession. The heavenward spirit cries out, "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God." The hell-ward spirit cries, "Let there be no God." Ah, foolish prayer, never to be answered !

II. MAN'S GREATEST EVENT. How eventful the lives of some men ; the workhouse boy becomes a merchant prince, the child of wealthy parents is buried in a pauper's grave. Yea, each has his eventful days ; the day you left home, the day you married ; the day your child was born—were eventful days ; the day you die will be eventful ; but there is one that looms above all others, is called "THAT DAY." To meet God. How solemn, how certain, how universal, how impartial the decisions ! Our lips must not attempt a description—we point to Scripture, but we do not know all its meaning. (Matt. xxv. ; xxxi. 3 ; Acts xvii. 31 ; 2 Cor. v. 10 ; Rev. xx. 12.)

III. MAN'S GREATEST DUTY. "Prepare." "Seek first the kingdom of God," &c. How must man prepare to meet his God ? Not by arranging and sorting his thoughts and feelings, and adjusting his garments so as to make a fair show in the flesh ; but by looking up to God, and learning from His Book what are his dispositions towards us. He is the offended party, and He must mention His own terms. (1) Consider the claims of Divine justice. Sin must be punished. The honor of God's broken law must be satisfied. (2) Consider the fulness of Divine love. God does not mock men by commanding them to prepare to meet Him. He has provided the means. The cross displays the resources of Divine love. (3) Consider the patience of the Father of mercies. How long is the day of mercy ! How slow is He to execute judgment !—H. T. MILLER.

THE GOSPEL ERA.

"Arise, shine ; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee."—Isa. lx. 1.

I. THE GOSPEL ERA IS DISTINGUISHED BY A SPECIAL REVELATION OF DIVINE GLORY. The light that has "come" to the world is the glory of the Lord. What is "the glory

of the Lord?" We take the answer which the Eternal gave to the request of Moses, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory." The reply was not, "I will show thee the infinitude of my possessions, the boundlessness of my dominions, the almightiness of my power, the immeasurable depths of my wisdom," but, "I will cause all my goodness to pass before thee." The Gospel is a wonderful revelation of God's goodness, in the form of amazing mercy towards a guilty world. (1) *The glory of His goodness is seen in the gift of His Son.* "He spared not His own Son," &c. His merciful goodness floods the world with its brightness. (2) *The glory of His goodness is seen in the entire history of His Son.* All the compassion, the tender love and mercy, which Christ displayed when on earth, were the reflected rays of Infinite goodness. Truly then, in the Gospel "the glory of the Lord has risen upon us." It is the great sun in our moral sky.

II. THE GOSPEL ERA IMPOSES A SPECIAL OBLIGATION UPON THE WORLD. "Arise and shine." (1) *Arise.* Do not sleep while the rays of Divine goodness are streaming on you. Arise to *thought*, to *penitence*, to *gratitude*, to *worship*. Arise, discharge the

duties and enjoy the advantages of a day flooded with the sun of mercy. (2) *Shine.* Reflect the rays of this goodness. Let this love of God be so "shed abroad in thy heart," that it stream forth its radiance in thy every action, and bless the circle in which thou livest. Do not be as an opaque body, obstructing the rays and throwing a shadow over thy sphere; but be a mirror, to reflect every falling beam.

LIFE'S DAY, AND DIVINE STRENGTH.

"As thy days so shall thy strength be."—Deut. xxxiii. 25.

Four things are suggested by these words:

I. LIFE IS A DAY. "Thy day." Not thy month, thy year, nor even thy week, but thy day. Life is only as a day. It has its dawn, its noontide, and sunset. How short is life. Short (1) When compared with the work which is to be done. (2) When compared with the retributive period which succeeds it.

II. CHANGEFULNESS IS THE CHARACTERISTIC OF THIS DAY. "As thy day." Implying that the day varies. So it is; it is made up of a

series of alternations. Health and sickness, friendship and bereavement, prosperity and adversity, defeats and triumphs, sorrows and joys, form the history of this short day. There is nothing settled. Everything is as shifting as the clouds.

III. DIVINE STRENGTH IS REQUIRED THROUGH ALL ITS CHANGES. Here is a promise of Divine strength. Rightly to live this day, strength from heaven is needed; needed from the opening dawn until the closing night. This strength is needed even in its most prosperous hours, for prosperity is oftentimes more dangerous to the soul than adversity. Hence the wise petition in our glorious litany, "In all time of our wealth," "Good Lord deliver us." The goodness of men has often appeared like the beautiful frostwork upon the trees of some vast forest; it sparkled

brightly in the intense cold of adversity, but melted away before the rising sun of prosperity. Divine strength, therefore, is needed in all the changes of the day, in youth and age, &c.

IV. THE DIVINE STRENGTH TO THE GOOD SHALL BE PROPORTIONED TO THE PERIOD. "As thy day." It shall be measured out according to the exigency. This is the case, however, only to the *good*. The promise was made to Asher, who was a good man. "My grace," said Christ to Paul, "is sufficient for thee." The veracity of God, the sympathy of Christ, and the experience of the good, warrant our strongest confidence in this promise. Let us seize it and hold it ever with tenacity. It will make us strong in the present, and calm, and even exultant in prospect of the future.



The Pulpit and its Handmaids.

LIFE ETERNAL : AUGUSTINE AND
HIS MOTHER.

More than fourteen centuries ago, on the borders of the Italian Sea, this life eternal, of which we treat, was the subject of a conversation between a dying woman and of a young man, who had just become dead to the life of passion. Have you ever seen the engraving of a painting by Ary Scheffer, at the foot of which one reads these words, "Saint Augustine et sa mere Sainte Momique?" Have you observed, that both their views seem directed to the same heaven, where the one sought the foretaste of her approaching bliss, and the other, the strength necessary for that active duty which was to move the Church, and to produce those words whose accents still vibrate, after fourteen hundred years have passed away? This appears to be the page which inspired the painter. It is Augustine who is speaking: "As the day of my mother's death approached, it happened that on one occasion we found ourselves alone; she and I, leaning on the window, which looked into the garden of the house where we had gone down to, at the port of Ostia. There, far from the crowd, after the fatigue of a long route, we waited the moment of crossing. We were alone conversing with ineffable sweetness; and in the forgetfulness of the past, devouring the horizon of the future, we mutually enquired what eternal life will be to the saints. Our discourse was highly agreeable, and forgetting the past, we endeavored to conceive aright the nature of the eternal life of the saints. It was evident to us, that no carnal

delights deserved to be named on this subject; erecting our spirits more ardently, we ascended above the noblest parts of the material creation to the consideration of our own minds, and passing above them, we attempted to reach heaven itself to come to Thee, by whom all things were made. There, our hearts were enamoured, and there we held fast the first fruits of the Spirit, and returned to the sound of our own voice, which gave us an emblem of the Divine Word. We said, if the flesh, the imagination, and every tongue should be silenced, which proclaim, WE MADE NOT OURSELVES, BUT HE WHO REMAINETH FOR EVER;—if these things should now hold their peace, and God alone should speak, not by any emblems or created things, but by Himself, so that we could hear His word—should this be continued, and other visions be withdrawn, and this alone seize and absorb the spectator for ever, is not this the meaning: 'Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.' At the moment the world appeared to us of no value: and she said, 'Son, I know no delight in life. What should I do here, and why I am here, I know not; the hope of this life being quite spent. One thing only, your conversion, was an object for which I wished to live. My God has given me this in large measure. What do I here?'"—M. ERNEST NAVILLE.

MATERIALISM—AN INSUPPORTABLE DOCTRINE.

The doctrine of the *materialists* was always, even in my youth, a cold, heavy, dull, and insupportable doctrine to me, and necessarily tending to atheism. When I heard

with disgust, in the dissecting rooms, the plan of the physiologist, of the gradual secretion of matter, and its becoming imbued with irritability, ripening into sensibility, and acquiring such organs as were necessary, by its own inherent forces, and at last rising into intellectual existence—a walk into the green fields, or woods, by the banks of rivers, brought back my feelings from nature to God. I saw in all the powers of nature, the instruments of the Deity. The sun-beams, the breath of the zephyr, awakened animation in forms prepared by Divine intelligence to receive it; the insensate seed, the slumbering egg, which were to be vivified, appeared, like the new-born animal, works of a Divine mind: I saw *love* as the creative principle in the material world, and this love only as a Divine attribute. Then in my own mind, I felt, connected with new sensations and indefinite hopes, a thirst for immortality; the great names of other ages, and of distant nations, appeared to me to be still living around me; and even in the funeral monuments of the heroic and the great, I saw, as it were, the indestructibility of mind. These feelings, though generally considered as poetical, offer a sound philosophical argument in favor of the immortality of the soul. In all the habits and instincts of young animals, their feelings or movements may be traced in intimate relation to their improved perfect state; their sports have always affinities to their modes of hunting or catching their food; and young birds, even in the nest, show marks of fondness which, when their frames are developed, become signs of actions necessary to the reproduction and preservation of the species. The desire of glory, of honor, of immortal fame, and of constant knowledge, so usual in

young persons of well constituted minds, cannot, I think, be other than symptoms of the infinite and progressive nature of intellect—hopes which, as they cannot be gratified here, belong to a frame of mind suited to a nobler state of existence.

SIR HUMPHREY DAVY.

SIR WILLIAM HAMILTON AND
CALVINISM.

When Sir William Hamilton applied to the Town Council of Edinburgh for the professorship of logic and metaphysics in the university of that city, he requested me to give him testimonials. I had no hesitation in assuring the council that they could not possibly appoint a more learned metaphysician. Immediately before the election, however, I received a visit from a member of the council, Mr. Bruce, who informed me that he and several of his colleagues were dissatisfied with Sir William's testimonials, and had made up their minds to vote in favour of the candidate recommended by Dr. Chalmers, unless I should succeed in convincing them that Sir William was not addicted to sceptical opinions. This was an unexpected responsibility. I had frequently conferred with Sir William on all subjects, philosophical and religious, sometimes during walks of many miles into the country; but it was his practice, for the sake of argument, to oppose any opinion which I happened to advance. At one time he would defend Popery, and neology at another. Almost the only doctrine which he consistently denounced was Calvinism; for he considered unconditional decrees and philosophical necessity incompatible with human responsibility and future retribution. I had

seen and heard many evidences of his orthodoxy. He had always zealously opposed phrenology as leading to materialism and infidelity. He had assured me that if my chapel had not been at the furthest extremity of the town, he would regularly attend it; and he had recommended to me Dr. Price on Morals, as not only "the best book on the subject in the English language," but also as teaching "a moral philosophy peculiarly in accordance with the moral philosophy of the Bible." But before committing myself to the Town Council, I determined to obtain from Sir William himself a more distinct confession of faith. Accordingly I hastened to his residence in Manor Place, and stated

to him the reason of my visit. He was at first much annoyed that I did not at once consider myself justified in answering for his orthodoxy. By degrees he got into better humour, and said, "Surely you ought to know that I maintain no heresy but the Arminian. You ought to know that my philosophy has given great offence to the free-thinkers on the continent, because it peculiarly harmonizes with Christianity. You ought to know," &c. He made further appeals to my knowledge of his views. All of these I carefully noted down, and communicated to Mr. Bruce and his friends who declared themselves satisfied, and voted in favour of Sir William.
—JOHN SINCLAIR, M.A., F.R.S.E.

Theological Notes and Queries.

OPEN COUNCIL.

[The utmost freedom of honest thought is permitted in this department. The reader must therefore use his own discriminating faculties, and the Editor must be allowed to claim freedom from responsibility.]

Queries to be Answered.

1.—What is the difference between believing and faith?

2.—Have we any express revelation as to the resurrection bodies of the wicked? Does not the whole of 1 Cor. xv. refer solely to the resurrection bodies of the good?

3.—Is there any Scriptural

authority for making either Baptism or the Lord's Supper a condition of church fellowship.—K.R.

4.—Was it an angelic or a human spirit that appeared to John, Rev. xix. 10, and xxii. 9.

WILLIAM THOMAS.

5.—What is the spiritual idea intended to be expressed by the phrase "Blood of Christ."—F.C.

Literary Notices.

[We hold it to be the duty of an Editor either to give an early notice of the books sent to him for remark, or to return them at once to the Publisher. It is unjust to praise worthless books : it is robbery to retain unnoticed ones.]

THE REVIEWER'S CANON.

In every work regard the author's end,
Since none can compass more than they intend.

HISTORY OF THE REFORMATION IN EUROPE IN THE TIME OF CALVIN.

Vols. I. and II. By J. H. MERLE D'AUBIGNÉ. London : Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, & Green.

DR. D'AUBIGNÉ'S "History of the Reformation," which appeared nearly a quarter of a century ago, has rendered him famous through Christendom, and prepared the way for an immense circulation of any of his future historical productions. In that magnificent work he described the heroic times of Luther, and the wonderful effects which he produced in Europe by the doctrine of justification by faith, in a style so picturesque, with a genius so glowing, and a spirit so truthful and devout, that gave it a marvellous spell upon the heart of the reader. The readers of that work will hail this with lofty expectations, nor will they be disappointed. "His eye is not dim, nor is his natural force abated." He looks at things with the same eagle glance, and grasps them with the same giant force. The Reformation work in the time of Calvin is the great subject of these volumes. This Reformation, the author shows, restored to the human race what the middle ages had stolen from them ; it delivered them from the traditions, laws, and despotism of the Papacy ; it put an end to the minority and tutelage in which Rome claimed to keep mankind for ever ; and, by calling upon man to establish his faith, not on the word of a priest, but on the infallible Word of God—and by announcing to everyone free access to the Father, through Christ Jesus, it proclaimed and brought about the hour of Christian manhood. This work must not be regarded as a history of Calvin, although the name of that reformer appears on the title-page, and is, necessarily, referred to in the course of the work ; but it is simply an historic sketch of the Reformation in Europe, beginning with Geneva, and running through the period of Calvin's life. The idea of this work, the author informs us, "was first suggested to his mind forty years ago by the learned Neander, who urged him to undertake it." The work abounds with such striking anecdotes and magnificent descriptions, as will make the reader almost impatient for the forthcoming volumes which are to complete the grand story.

AN ESSAY ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF TIME. By JOHN FOSTER; with a Preface by JOHN SHEPPARD; Edited by J. E. RYLAND, M.A. London: Jackson, Walford, & Hodder.

Does this volume really contain the productions of the distinguished essayist, or is it composed of a little from Foster's own pen, with a great deal from literary forgers who seek to drive a trade in counterfeit materials? This was the question started in our minds when the volume first came into our hands. An examination of the work, however, soon settled that question with us, and made us feel that Foster is indeed here—here in many of his striking angularities and matchless qualities as a thinker and as a scribe. It is true that a good deal in the work is fragmentary and unfinished, but it is all the more suggestive for this. The work contains an essay on the Improvement of Time, in which is discussed the value, the capacity, the swiftness of time, and the ultimate object of the improvement of time. It contains two complete sermons, with the notes of sixteen others, and also twenty-one letters. To characterize these productions were superfluous; to recommend them would savor of arrogance. All that we say of the volume is, that John Foster is here.

THE DIVINE MYSTERY OF PEACE. By J. BALDWIN BROWN, B.A. London: Jackson, Walford, & Hodder.

THE title of this book does not seem to us either a wise or a happy one. "Mystery of Peace!" If it is a mystery, leave it alone for silent wonder. Why write about it? Our logic can no more make luminous a mystery, than the breath of an infant can scatter the clouds that darken the sun. The book, however, is a gem. The subjects of its five most eloquent and thoughtful discourses are:—the Disciples, the Father, the Lamb of God, the Holy Ghost, the Conqueror of the World. Mr. Brown moves in the realm of Divine revelations with a mind untrammelled by systems, and undaunted by the fiends of the *Odium Theologicum*. He sees with his own eyes, hears with his own ears, deeply and devoutly reflects upon the impressions he has received from sacred sights and sounds, and speaks out his conclusions in language of great clearness, beauty, and force. Heartily do we rejoice in the appearance of sermons like these. They serve to redeem the modern pulpit from that popular contempt into which a certain style of preaching is reducing it. May Heaven multiply preachers, able and willing to deliver such discourses as these!

REASON AND REVELATION. By the Venerable JOHN SINCLAIR, M.A., F.R.S.E. London: William Macintosh.

THIS volume contains two charges delivered to the clergy of the Arch-deaconry, Middlesex, at the visitations held at St. Paul's, Covent

Garden, in 1861 and 1863. The subject of these charges, namely, "Reason and Revelation," lies at the foundation of our most vital faiths, and is ever being pressed on the attention of the Biblical student by the sceptical speculations of this age. The venerable Archdeacon treats this subject with a special reference to the "Essays and Reviews," and the Colenso notions. He is very sweeping in his charges, and severe in his invectives. Speaking of the sceptical speculations of the age, he says, "They are to be discovered among all the orders of the clergy. The public is cruelly imposed upon by clerical titles, and designations prefixed to sceptical performances; the more advanced of which pretend to make the Bible credible by explaining away its miracles, its prophecies, and its inspiration, and reducing it to the level of an ordinary book, no more entitled to authority than the Ethics of Aristotle, the Offices of Cicero, or the Moral Sentiments of Adam Smith. It is a melancholy and humiliating fact, that the laity in this country are no longer able, as in former times, to rely upon the fidelity of their ministers to those articles of belief which they have solemnly sworn to maintain." These "charges" are very able, and can scarcely be read without profit.

CHRIST ALL IN ALL; or, WHAT CHRIST IS MADE TO BELIEVERS. By
Rev. PHILIP HENRY. London: Religious Tract Society.

THIS work was published in the year 1830, as an appendix to the miscellaneous works of Matthew Henry. It has since been reprinted in America, and read with great profit by many on both sides of the Atlantic. His son Matthew Henry thus describes his venerable sire as a preacher: "He used to preach in a fixed method, and linked his subjects in a sort of chain. He adapted his method and style to the capacity of his hearers, fetching his similitudes for illustration from those things which were familiar to them. He did not shoot the arrow of the Word over their heads in high notions, or the flourishes of affected rhetoric; nor under their feet by blunt and homely expressions, but to their hearts in close and lively applications. His delivery was very graceful and agreeable; neither noisy and precipitate on the one hand, nor dull and slow on the other. His doctrine dropped as the dew, and distilled as the soaking rain, and came with a charming, pleasing power, such as many bore witness to." These sermons verify the judgment of the author's illustrious son.

BIBLICAL HELP TOWARD HOLINESS IN LIVING AND HAPPINESS IN DYING.
By JAMES MORISON. Glasgow: A. Wallace & Co. London:
Ward & Co.

HERE is another of Dr. Morison's valuable contributions to practical godliness, and it deserves what we trust it will obtain—an extensive circulation. We are glad to know that the admiring readers and students of Dr. Morison's works are determined to express their gratitude

in the tangible form of a handsome Testimonial. Though unable to join in all the conclusions of this eminent author, we yield to none in admiration for the remarkable ability which he brings to the discussion of every subject, and in appreciation of the good that has resulted from his labours. He has done much to break the monotony of religious thought in Scotland, to free religious people from the fetters of human systems, and to call into the service of the ministry a goodly company of powerful preachers who draw their theology fresh from the glorious old Book. In addition to those of his own church, there are not a few in all denominations who have derived immense service from his teaching, and are ever happy to acknowledge their obligation. This Testimonial movement will be hailed by them as an opportunity for expressing their gratitude.

THE WORKS OF JOHN HOWE, M.A. Vol. VI. London: Religious Tract Society.

THIS volume completes this splendid edition of Howe's immortal works. It is made up of funeral sermons, which abound with lofty thoughts upon points most vital to man. We thank the editor, who has, by collating the text of Calamy with that of editions issued in Howe's lifetime, by correcting the former by the latter, and by improving the punctuation, made the productions of the illustrious author far more readable and intelligible than they have ever appeared before.

WORDS OF PEACE. By Rev. ASHTON OXENDEN. London: William Macintosh.

THIS work, the pious author informs us, is intended for those whom God has afflicted. His aim in the work is to show that sickness usually comes as a messenger of love, and by God's grace may be made a great blessing to the soul. The sentiments are truly soothing, the style is clear, the type is large, and in every respect it is a suitable manual to put into the hands of the poor and afflicted.

WORTH HER WEIGHT IN GOLD. London: Wertheim, Macintosh, & Hunt.

THIS is a tale intended to develop the worth of a godly servant. It is well conceived, wrought out in an interesting way, and salutary in its moral lessons. It is elegantly "got up."

ARCTIC DISCOVERY AND ADVENTURE. London: Religious Tract Society.

THIS work is by the same author of "Brazil: its History, People, Natural Productions, &c." He writes clearly, but somewhat dryly. He lacks the faculty of touching facts into life. This is a book of information, and abounds with many marvellous incidents, which will secure for it a reading throughout.



A HOMILY

ON

The Weakness of Scepticism.

“For we can do nothing against the truth.”—2 Cor. xiii. 8.



THE scheme of Christianity, as presented in the Scriptures, is perfectly *adapted* to the constitution of the *human mind*, and the circumstances of human condition. The mind is so framed that it cannot but receive truth, and appreciate it, when clearly discovered. It may mistake *error* for truth, and so be decoyed away into error. But truth is naturally irresistible. The Christian religion is based upon the plainest reason and the simplest philosophy known among men. The machinery of Christianity is perfectly adjusted to a harmonious inter-working with the machinery of the mind and man's moral framework, to which it is presented. Then, if in the sequel of things man should either be justified or condemned by the law of Christianity, he shall also in the same way, and to the same extent, be justified and condemned by his own nature. The principles of justice harmonize exactly, in every note and in every tone, with the pronunciations of our conscience. Hence it is said in Luke xix. 22, “Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee.” God has no argument with sinners upon matters of principle. The elements of the Gospel *come in conflict with no man's principles*. It follows, then, that all specific objections to Christianity will tell with equal force against the *principles*

of the objector himself, and those which are notoriously entertained, avowed, claimed, and acted upon every day by all men. That which conflicts with the one, will for the most part conflict, for the same reason, and to the same extent, with the other. The notion that there is an unending debate, a continuous controversy about the principles of Christianity—whether they be true or not, sound or faulty—that some men take this side and some that, and so the principles of men oppose each other, is altogether erroneous. There is no such debate, there never was, never can be, on the essential principles of truth.

God has more ways than one of communicating truth to the world. The fullest and most sublime of these is His written Word. Amidst other sources of information, the Bible occupies the position the sun does amidst the stars of the firmament, it quenches their feeble glimmerings by the splendor of its noonday. The sun, as he rides up the east, and sheds his light upon the world, does not contradict anything before known, or which before existed; nor does he make war upon the organs of vision. He only makes everything the more easily seen. The Bible is the same kind of instrument in religion that the telescope is in astronomy. Look into the heavens, and all you see is the emptiness of space or the darkness of unlimited night. But the lens carries the sight forward and introduces it into new worlds, and displays to the mind of the beholder thousands of grand and interesting objects, *not which did not exist before*, but which, unassisted, *we did not know of*. And as the telescope asks the beholder to open his eyes and see objects not discovered before, and think about other things, so the Bible, with its principles of religion, and by its assistance, asks men to look at some things in God's dealings and providence they did not know of before, and which things do not antagonize with men's common every-day sentiments, but which perfectly harmonize with them. As history, geography, or chemistry open their hidden treasure to the mind, so does the Bible.

We call attention to two propositions, in order to show the strength of Christianity and the weakness of scepticism :—

I. THAT THE ESSENTIAL TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY HAS NEVER BEEN REALLY DENIED. Perhaps to many this may seem a bold and hazardous declaration. All I ask, is, that you will receive it with more than ordinary emphasis, while I give it a word of explanation.

When I say *the essential truth of Christianity has never been really denied*, I mean precisely this :—That no man ever denied the truth of religion as set forth in the Scriptures, who, at the same time, undertook to set forth fair logical grounds of objections, or who undertook to set up and explain an antagonism between the principles of religion and those of his own nature. I have no argument to make in favor of Christianity, but I desire to show the *jolly* and *inconsistency* of irreligion.

The *truth* of the Christian *religion* is, in the very nature of the case, in the keeping of *experimental* Christians ; but the truth of Christianity, as a theoretical system, is in the keeping of all men who handle the implements of scientific truth, or who search into the magazines of moral, mental, and physical philosophy.

The truth of religion has never been really denied. The authenticity of the Scriptures has been denied. But the *authenticity of the Scriptures* and the *truth of religion* are not one and the same question. The one enquires into the history of a printed Bible, and the other into the *rightness* of the elements it contains. The Bible, it is assumed, is demonstrably true, irrespective of any enquiries into its history. Its truth has, in fact, a thousand times been demonstrated by those whose learning scarcely enabled them to comprehend what is meant by its authenticity. It is not said that the religion of the Bible may be true, and the Bible unauthentic; it is said that demonstration in the one case does not necessarily institute an enquiry in the other. The Bible purports to set forth a rule of life, and proposes that if men will, in good faith, believe certain things, and live in a certain way, that certain

valuable results, in life and in death, will follow. An investigation, therefore, of its truth is an enquiry into the truth of these facts. *Where are these facts found amongst men? In the experience of living Christians and nowhere else.* What, then, is essential to a logical denial of the truth of Christianity? Facts can only be proved or denied by the production of testimony, and an argument on either side is nothing more or less than a comment upon such testimony. It cannot be said, then, that a man has denied the truth of Christianity until he has first produced legitimate testimony in the case. *Has this ever been attempted?* How must any fact be proved? Not, surely, by bringing forward a person who is merely called a witness, *but by the production of competent testimony.* The witness must have been in circumstances to *know* the fact in question. A witness in a court of justice is enquired of, *if a certain man performed a certain action, at a certain time and place.* He says, *No.* His testimony is adverse. But he is further enquired of, whether or no he was present at the time and place in question. *No, he was never there—never saw the man; he does not believe the fact—records his testimony against it.* Another witness is brought forward, and another, and another, and a thousand others, who testify in a like manner, and lengthened comments are made thereupon. Now, has the fact yet been annulled? *Certainly it has not.* It cannot be said to be contradicted until witnesses who *profess to have been in circumstances to know*, testify on the subject. Or it is asserted that the taking of a certain medicine will produce a certain sensation in the head and nerves. Now, certainly, it cannot be said that that proposition is refuted by logical argument until such refutation is *based upon the testimony of persons who have taken the medicine in question.* It might as well be said that the St. Lawrence does not empty into the Gulf of St. Lawrence, because a certain person does not desire to navigate its waters. The testimony does not relate to the issue. No argument is as yet made. Neither have infidels

made an argument on the truth of the Christian religion. They have debated many questions on many points touching the authenticity of the Bible ; but these debates, however commenced or carried on, do not, nor can they, relate to men's experience respecting *the truth of the religion*. The Bible prescribes certain remedies for certain human misfortunes and disabilities of a moral and spiritual nature. Are these prescriptions *efficacious or not* ? Questions relating to the biography or morals of the reputed authors of these rules of living cannot answer *this* question. Suppose the truth of a nautical chart of certain seas be called in question. The question respecting it, is, whether it does or does not correctly measure the distances from place to place ; locate the islands truly ; measure the waters correctly in these or those places ; correctly point out the rocks here, the reefs there, and the harbors where they really are. Now, a witness to prove that these facts are not true, testifies that *the book was not written* by its *reputed author*. He tells us that there is evidence in the book, or in other books, that the reputed author of the work was not himself a navigator ; that he lived and died long before the book was written. In short, we are told that the book is a forgery—was written by mercenary men, not for the benefit of navigators, but to make money. It is all a cheat. But these statements do not relate to the issue—they do not pertain to the question. The question is *the truth of the book*. The questions which a navigator is interested in are of a very different kind from all this. He does not care who wrote the book, any more than he does what particular kind of ink it was written with. He is uninterested in the motive the writer had in making the book, or whether he had a motive at all. He cares not, even, whether the book was written at all, or whether it came in some other way. He only desires to know whether it tells truly about the waters, and these headlands, and those reefs, and these harbors, that he may navigate the seas in safety. These, and these only, are the questions that pertain to the truth of the scheme set forth. And how are you to prove or

deny this question? It can only be proved or denied by a navigator who has tested the facts. None but a navigator, who has been on the spot and made the examination, is capable of giving testimony. Landsmen know nothing about it. They cannot, in the nature of the case. Now, the Bible claims to be such a chart as this; and the question is—*Is it true?* How is this question to be answered? What kind of information or testimony affords us a logical response? An answer to a *different* question from that which is asked is not logical. To tell us who wrote or who did not write, does not inform us anything with regard to its truth. How, then, is the truth of the Bible to be tested? The experience of professing Christians, and nothing else, manifestly, can be brought forward as the basis of an argument. And when did men, by the thousand, who had been longest, and most faithful in their adherence to the Bible precepts, come forward and testify, “I have fought a bad fight, I have kept the faith; but henceforth I find there is laid up for me no such crown as the Bible promises—it is all a cheat, a delusion!” When did the faithful, honest Christian of threescore years and ten, in the last ebbings of life, with the openings of the spirit-land just in view—listening to catch the sound of the bells of the city of God as they chime the jubilee of salvation—after his adieu to the world testify—“I regret it! I regret it! Wife, children, friends, follow me not hither: trust not in God, believe not in Jesus, for he is a deceiver!” When did infidelity bring forward such testimony as *this*? Until they do all of this, with no sort of logical propriety can it be said they have denied the *truth* of the Christian religion, whatever *else* they may have attempted. Then, it was never attempted to invalidate the *truth* of the principles of religion, the prescriptions for sin, which are found in the Bible. Any attempt to prove anything about the authenticity of the Scriptures, is only an attempt to evade the question, but not an answer to it. To prove, if it could be proved, that the Bible was not written by its reputed authors, does not prove, or attempt to

prove anything with regard to its being a Divine revelation. To go at once to the utmost verge of supposition,—suppose any amount of testimony were produced, going to show that not one of the men who are said to have written the Bible ever lived. This would only prove that it was written by some *other* persons. It was written because it is here. And if the first five books were not written by Moses, then they were written by some other person. And to attempt to show that Moses did not write them, only creates the necessity of accounting for them in some other way. That the Bible is *here*, and *true*, is the strongest evidence the nature of the case admits of, that it is of Divine origin. And to attempt to prove it unauthentic, notwithstanding its truth, is only an attempt to prove that it wrote itself, or that it came without being written, which would be, if possible, to furnish still stronger proofs of its Divine origin. Suppose it to be claimed that the book on navigation, before referred to, is proved not to have been written by its reputed author. If it correctly describes the ocean in a thousand places, and fails in none, then it was written *truly*, whoever wrote it. Or if it was not written by some person who knew what he was writing, and who intended to write the truth, then it was miraculously written. The conclusion is *inevitable*. The objector may have it which way he pleases. If the Bible was written ignorantly or fraudulently, it is a miracle of a most overwhelming and stupendous character. That it contains truth far above human wisdom, *if its principles of religion be true*, is unquestioned and unquestionable. If it were not written by its reputed authors, then the error is with regard to the *writers*, but not with regard to the question of its *truth*. For it is a revelation made in some way if it be true, not merely because it is true, but because such truths could not have been produced by human wisdom, if it does correctly prescribe for sin. These prescriptions could not have been guessed at, or if they were, then that is a still greater miracle.

Then we need not follow the infidel in his attempts to prove

the unauthenticity of the Bible. For in proportion to his imagined success, he only places himself under the necessity of showing *how else* it came to exist. We are only interested in his attempts to prove that the remedies against the evils of sin it contains, *are not true remedies*. And this, we have seen, never was, and never will be attempted. It is claimed by all Christians, in virtue of evidence no less than the loud utterances of personal experience. This scheme was, for thousands of years, and is now, the only great earthly desideratum. No man ever questioned the utter impossibility of human wisdom and skill furnishing such a scheme. Obviously it must come from Heaven or not come at all. Then, if the Bible be *true*—if it does correctly prescribe against the results of sin—it came from heaven in some way. *How* it came is another question. It is said, that Moses and Paul, and others, were inspired to write it. But suppose this be objected to, what of it? All that could be attempted to be proved would be that Moses' name was not *Moses*, and that Paul's name was not Saul of Tarsus, or that they lived in other ages than those assigned them, and such like errors. But all this does not affect the proper Divinity of the revelation. If it was not made in this way, then it was made in some other way. If *true*, it is superhuman. How the revelation was made is an incidental and not a primary question. As a system of true religion, adapted to man's condition as he is, and therefore as a revelation from God, it must, at least, be held to be true until some *relevant and competent testimony* be brought against it. *And this has never yet been done.*

Every lawyer has read a book on the elementary principles of jurisprudence. It is said to have been written by one *William Blackstone*. Now two questions arise with regard to this book. If it was not written by the English Chancellor, then it is not genuine. And all that this amounts to, is, that we have got the *name* wrong. The other question respects the *truth* of the work. To answer this question you must compare the writing with the abstract

principles of jurisprudence, with the English constitution and statutes, upon which it purports to comment, and with the human mind. This is done, and it is found to be a deep and real exposition of these things. Then the book is true, whether any such man as Sir W. Blackstone ever lived or not. I have the strongest evidence my nature is capable of receiving—far, far above any testimony history can furnish—that the things written in this book have enlightened my mind on the subjects of which it treats. The things the book contains, are in me, as a matter of personal consciousness, and are entirely abstract from the man reputed to be the author. And so of the Christian. The Bible's principles *are in him*. And they *do* modify the ills of life, and open to him the portals of heaven. Then the questions of its truth, and of its revelation, are *settled*. The truths revealed in this Book *must* be from heaven, whether the Book was made by *good* men or *bad* men, by *wise* men or fools. If God inspired bad men and impostors to write His will, be it so.*

(To be Continued.)

* This article was left with us some three or four years ago by a clergyman, an M.A., of Cambridge. We now publish it, not because we endorse all the views and reasonings it contains, but because we think it suggestive of a very striking and strong species of argument in favor of the Christian religion. Should this meet the eyes of the author—who has gone, we understand, to America—we shall be glad to hear from him.

A Homiletic Glance at the Acts of the Apostles.

Able expositions of the ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, describing the manners, customs, and localities described by the inspired writers ; also interpreting their words, and harmonizing their formal discrepancies, are, happily, not wanting amongst us. But the eduction of its WIDEST truths and highest suggestions is still a felt desideratum. To some attempt at the work we devote these pages. We gratefully avail ourselves of all exegetical helps within our reach ; but to occupy our limited space with any lengthened archæological, geographical, or philological remarks, would be to miss our aim ; which is not to make bare the mechanical process of the study of Scripture, but to reveal its spiritual results.

SECTION FIRST.—Acts. i. 1—8.

“ The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen : To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God : And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water ; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel ? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you : and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth,” &c.

SUBJECT :—*The Uniqueness of Christ's Earthly Ministry.*

IN now entering on a new department of labor, we resolve to be guided by the same principles, and to aim at the same practical objects as ruled us in our “ *Genius of the Gospel*,”

and we invoke our readers to implore on our behalf the enlightenment of that Spirit without whose aid we shall only "darken counsel by words without knowledge." It seems desirable, before we attempt to deal with the Divine ideas of this book, to offer a few words by way of introduction on its *author, contents, and credibility.*

First: *Its author.* As the author does not subscribe his name to the work, but leaves his production to go forth anonymously, his personality is only discovered by circumstantial reasoning. It is worthy of note that whilst the names of the authors of the prophetic portions of the Bible are attached to their works, all the historical parts of the Holy Volume are anonymous. The book itself says (chaps. xvi., xx., xxi., xxvii., xxviii.) that the author was an eye-witness of the events and transactions narrated. An ancient and uniform tradition ascribes its authorship to Luke, who also wrote the third Gospel, and whom the apostle Paul mentions no less than three times in his epistles; once as a companion, 2 Tim. iv. 11; once as a fellow-laborer, Phil. 24; and once as a beloved physician, Col. iv. 11. It seems pretty clear that the author of the third Gospel was the author of this book. It has the same peculiarities of style, it follows in historical order, and it is inscribed to the same man, Theophilus. The voice of Christian antiquity agrees in the ascription of its authorship to Luke.*

* This work is in all the catalogues of the books of the New Testament. The Acts are referred to by Clement of Rome, A.D. 96; Ignatius, A.D. 107; Polycarp, A.D. 108; Justin Martyr, A.D. 140; Polykrates, A.D. 178; Clement of Alexandria, A.D. 194. Tertullian, A.D. 200, calls it "Luke's Commentary," or history. Origen, A.D. 230, speaks of "Luke who wrote the Gospel and the Acts." Jerome, A.D. 392, says, "The Acts of the Apostles, another work of Luke the physician, 'whose praise is in the Gospel,' (2 Cor. viii. 18) contains the history of the infancy of the Church." Augustine, A.D. 395, says that "Luke, after having written a Gospel, even one of the four which are in so high esteem, containing a history of Christ's words and works, and the time of his resurrection and ascension, wrote such an account of the acts of the apostles as he judged to be sufficient for the edification of believers; and it is the only history of the apostles which has been

Secondly: *Its contents.* It is called the "Acts of the Apostles." There is nothing to prove that its author, whoever he was, gave it this name. Some of the ancient fathers called it by other names, such as the Fifth Gospel, the Gospel of the Holy Spirit, the Gospel of the Risen Jesus Christ. Its present title would lead one to expect a record of *all* the acts of the apostles, a kind of biographic sketch of each, but it supplies nothing of the kind. An enlightened modern critic has described the book "*as a special history of the planting and extension of the Church, both among Jews and Gentiles, by the gradual establishing of radiating centres or sources of influence at certain salient points throughout a large part of the empire, beginning at Jerusalem and ending at Rome.*" The whole book, says the same author, naturally falls into two great parts, each of which may be grouped around a central figure. The subject of the first part is the planting and extension of the Church among the Jews by the ministry of Peter. The subject of the second part is the planting and extension of the Church among the Gentiles by the ministry of Paul. The work is a kind of ecclesiastical sketch-book.

received by the Church, all others having been rejected as not to be relied upon." He adds, "Mark and Luke wrote at a time when their writings might be approved, not only by the Church, but also by apostles still living." Chrysostom, A.D. 398, says, "Luke leaves us thirsting for more; but if he had proceeded, it would have been only a repetition of like discourses and works, like dangers, difficulties, and sufferings." Eusebius, of the fourth century, says, "Luke, who was born at Antioch and by profession a physician, being for the most part connected with Paul, and familiarly acquainted with the rest of the apostles, has left us two inspired books, institutes of that spiritual-healing art which he obtained from them. One of these is his Gospel, in which he testifies that he has recorded 'as those who were from the beginning eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word,' delivered to him; whom also, he says, 'he has in all things followed.' The other is his Acts of the Apostles, which he composed, not from what he had from others, but from what he had seen himself." The early fathers multiply the same testimony. Araton, a sub-deacon in the Church at Rome in the sixth century, versified the Acts of the Apostles.

Thirdly : *Its credibility.* The canonical authority, says Barnes, of this book rests on the same foundation as that of the Gospel by the same author. Its authenticity has not been called in question at any time in the Church. The undesigned coincidences, shown by Paley, between this history by Luke and the letters by Paul, the air of simple reality which pervades every part, the unimpostor-like habit of crowding his pages with names, dates, and facts, and the fearless manner of narrating the faults of his compeers, all go to commend this book to us as one of the most credible of records.*

The paragraph that we have selected urges on our attention two facts which mark off the *ministry of Christ on earth from that of any other* :—

I. HIS MINISTRY ON EARTH WAS ORIGINAL AND INITIATORY. “The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus *began* both to do and teach.” The “former work” was by general consent his Gospel, the Gospel according to Luke. Who this Theophilus was, to whom he inscribes this and his former production, is not known. We have only here the mere mention of his name. From the fact, however, that Luke made him his dedicatee, we may infer the probability that he was a friend of the writer, a man of some social distinction, and a Christian of eminence. The etymology of his name indicates that he was a friend of God. Who Theophilus was, however, is a matter of little importance, the substance of the book dedicated to him is what is vital and momentous, and that is, the *deeds and doctrines* of Christ—“All that Jesus began to do and teach.” The word “all” is not to be understood as literal but relative. It does not designate the whole of what Christ did actually do and teach on earth ; it would have taken ponderous folios to have recorded all this ; but it means all that came within the

* For a fuller treatment of the authorship, date, purport, credibility, &c., of this book, see Baumgarten, Neander, Schaff, Livermore, Dr. Alexander.

plan of the writer in His history. The word *began* is surely no redundancy ; it has a meaning, and we think a meaning with emphasis. It means one of two things, both of which are equally true in relation to Christ's ministry, *originality*, or *initiatoriness*.

First : *It may mean originality.* He "*began*." His ministry here was the beginning of a work which earth had never witnessed before ; something absolutely *new*. He began a something. His *works* were original. What He did here He did in His own strength ; the most brilliant deeds the holiest men of past times performed, were wrought not in their own strength, but in the strength of Heaven. They were but the mere organs of another power. Not so with the works of Christ ; what He did He did in His own name, and His own might as a God. His *teaching* was original. The doctrines He proclaimed, He derived not from others, or from any source out of Himself. "He was the truth." The doctrines He enunciated went out from Him as living streams from a fountain of life. His *life* was original. Such a life was never lived on this earth before ; so blending the weak with the strong, the fleeting with the eternal, the human with the Divine, and in all so absolutely true and pure. His history, therefore, was the beginning of a something that earth had never seen or felt before. It was a new fountain opened up on earth's parched desert, a new light kindled up on earth's dark sky. He *began* a new river of spiritual influence, a new system of government, a new race of men.

Secondly : *It may mean initiatoriness.* It may mean that what He did here was unfinished and introductory. Luke's idea, probably might have been, that his Gospel was the commencement of a life which was now developed in that history of the apostles which he was now writing. This is a view taken by certain eminent modern critics, and it is a view that harmonizes with the facts of the case. When Christ corporeally left the world, His work was not finished, nor did He cease His life on earth according to His promise, "I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." He took

up His abode with the apostles, He lived in them and wrought through them. "His spirit was manifested in their mortal bodies." Before His ascension, He lived and wrought in *one* human body, that which was born in Bethlehem and expired upon the cross. After His ascension, He lived and wrought in *many* human bodies. His inspired apostles were, in a sense, multiplied Christs. He was in them. They were conscious of His presence and His power, and they ascribed their triumph to His strength. "Thanks be to God who always causeth us to triumph in Christ." So that this Acts of the Apostles is but a chapter in the earthly biography of the Son of God. The following remarks of Baumgarten illustrate and confirm the view, that the history in the ACTS OF THE APOSTLES is but the history of Christ in His disciples:—"He it is who appoints the twelve witnesses (i. 24), who, after He Himself has received the Spirit, sends Him down from on high on His Church (ii. 33); who adds to His Church in Jerusalem (ii. 47); He, too, during the first days of the Church, is ever near His people Israel, to bless them in turning them away from their iniquities. He it is who works miracles, both of healing and destruction, in testimony to His apostles' preaching (iii. 6, 10, 30; ix. 34; xiii. 11; xiv. 3; xix. 13); to His dying martyr, Stephen, He reveals Himself standing at the right hand of God (vii. 55, 56); His angel speaks unto Philip (viii. 26); it is His spirit that caught him away (viii. 39); He appears to Saul of Tarsus (xix. 5, 27; xxii. 8, 26); His hand established the first Church among the Gentiles (xi. 27); His angel delivers St. Peter (xii. 7, 11, 17); His angel strikes the hostile Herod (xii. 23); He again it is who appears to St. Paul in the temple, and commits to him the conversion of the Gentiles (xxii. 17, 21); to Him the apostles and brethren address themselves on the occasion of the first mission to the Gentiles (xiii. 2, v. 47); to Him are the infant Churches commended (xiv. 23); His Spirit prevents the apostolic missionaries from preaching in Bithynia (xvi. 7); He calls them by the voice of the man of Macedonia into Europe (xvi. 10); He opens the hearts of Lydia and

effects the conversion in Europe (xvi. 14); He comforts and encourages Paul at Corinth (xviii. 9, 10); He strengthens him in prison, and informs him of his journey to Rome (xxiii. 11). These interventions of Jesus, so numerous, express, and decisive, are a sufficient warrant for our regarding His ascension as essentially His really setting on His throne. We are, therefore, fully justified in ascribing all to His influence, even in those instances where, without any express mention of His name, we are referred to the invisible world. In this way, therefore, we must consider the conversion of the Samaritans by miracles (viii. 6—12; the restoration of Tabitha (ix. 36—42); the vision of St. Peter (x. 10—16). And in like manner in those passages, also, where the Holy Ghost is spoken of as the efficient cause (as *e.g.* xiii. 2), we must bring before our minds the Lord Himself; for the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus (xvi. 6, 7); and also, in every mention of the name of God, as at xxvii. 23, we are to understand the person of Jesus, for, from i. 22, iv. 30, we learn that God works by Him."

Now, whether the word *began* means that His work was original or initiatory, or neither—what the word has suggested to us concerning that work is *true*, namely, that His ministry was absolutely new and introductory,* and thus perfectly *unique*.

II. HIS MINISTRY ON EARTH WAS RESUMED IN PERSON AFTER HIS DEATH. "Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen." "The day" refers to the day of ascension, which is here expressed as being "taken up," or, as some express it, "taken back" into heaven, and it is here said that this ascension took place "after" He had, by the Holy Ghost, qualified His disciples to represent Him on the earth, and carry on His cause when He was gone. *Christ did not leave the world before he had made effective arrangements for the working out of the grand*

* Baumgarten, p. 29.

purpose of His mission. He qualified His disciples "through the Holy Ghost." As this phrase in the original stands between the verbs *commanded* and *chose*, the passage may mean either that He chose the apostles through the Holy Spirit, or that He gave them the commission of the Holy Ghost. As both ideas are true, it is of no vital matter which idea is intended to be conveyed. Whatever Christ did, He did through the Divine Spirit; the Eternal Spirit was in all He thought or did. Divinity was the breath of His every word, and the pulse of His every act. Thus, after He had passed through the agonies of death after His passion, after He had been buried in the grave, He appeared again amongst men, and exercised His personal ministry for about forty days. The words of Luke here suggest three things about that ministry.

First: *His personal ministry, "after His passion," was an undoubted reality.* "To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." Elsewhere we are shown that these appearances place beyond all rational doubt the fact of His resurrection. "They were infallible proofs.*"

Secondly: *His personal ministry, after His passion, was confined to His disciples.* Before His death He spoke to Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, to promiscuous crowds. But we have not an instance of His speaking to any after His death but His disciples. He confined His attention to the men, between whom and Himself there was a vital spiritual connection. Henceforth He would deal with the unconverted world, not directly, but through the medium of His disciples. The passage suggests two thoughts in relation to His ministry amongst them. (1) The grand subject of His ministry amongst them was the *kingdom of God*. "The things pertaining to the kingdom of God," were the grand themes of His discourse. The discoveries of science, the speculations of philosophy, the politics of nations—such subjects as these, which agitated the outward world, were not

* See "Homilist," Vol. III., New Series, p. 650.

touched upon in His loftiest converse with His disciples. "Things" of a higher type; things that underlie and regulate the universe; things, compared with which the greatest things of earth are but as passing shadows; things that restore polluted spirits to holiness, disordered spirits to harmony, apostate spirits to God—were the things of His ministry, the things pertaining to His kingdom. That kingdom that "is not meat or drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost." Before His death, in many a living sentence and striking parable, He taught much about this "kingdom of God." Death had not changed His views, or modified His feelings in relation to this grand subject. The passage suggests:—(2) The grand endeavor of His ministry amongst men was to *prepare them to become His propagandists*. He was going to leave His cause in their hands. The diffusion of the knowledge of Himself, His ideas and purposes, was now to depend upon their agency. For a work of such awful magnitude and responsibility, they required special direction, training, and encouragement; thus to qualify them for this grand mission, was the great purpose of His ministry amongst them during this forty days.

He did this in various ways:—(1) By giving them distinct impressions of the work He required them to discharge. (Matt. xxviii. 19—20; Mark xvi. 15—16.) (2) By giving them an immovable conviction of the fact of His resurrection. Such a conviction was an indispensable qualification for their work. Doubts on this subject would render them utterly powerless in their mission. This conviction He gave by many "infallible proofs." These apostles *never* after questioned this fact. (3) By preparing them for the reception of their great Helper, the Holy Spirit. He commanded them to wait for the promise of the Father. This Helper the Father had promised. (Joel iii. 1; Zech. ii. 10.) This Helper John the Baptist had predicted, and his spiritually purifying work he had symbolized by his baptism with water. "John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." This Helper was to

come in an extraordinary plenitude of influence, after His departure. This He Himself taught, "It is expedient for you that I go away," &c. For this Spirit He bids them now "wait" in Jerusalem—"wait" in holy thought, and earnest prayer, and rapt devotion, so as to be prepared for the holy sight.

What a ministry was Christ's! His ministry was absolutely original. The holiest ministries of the greatest of God's servants have all been borrowed and derived. He "began" the work for Himself. He laid the foundation stone of a superstructure which He is now carrying on, and which, when He has finished, will fill the universe with wonder and praise. His ministry was initiatory. He personally resumed it after death, and He carries it on now. Through the long line of ages we find no other teacher rising from his grave to resume his work. Death puts an end to our ministry here. We can do nothing for the world when we are gone. Mortality seals our lips for ever. But though Christ has died and left the world, His work goes on here and advances among the children of men. He is preaching through all the good. "Lo, I am with you always," &c. Purify, enlighten, and raise up in ever-augmenting numbers, O Christ, men through whom Thou shalt breathe Thy Heavenly Spirit, and speak Thy quickening words to souls dead in trespasses and sin.



Germs of Thought.

SUBJECT :—*Sin Wrappings.*

“ So they wrap it up.”—Micah vii. 3.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Seventeenth.

THE author of this book, though a contemporary of Hezekiah, evidently sketches a period in Jewish history far more corrupt than his own day. The period he refers to in the context was a period when the good man had “perished out of the earth,” and when “upright men existed not ;” a period when all were “lying in wait for blood,” and every man was “against his brother ;” a period when men did evil with “both hands earnestly ;” and when the authorities, the “prince and the judge,” sold justice for bribes. Yet, though the people and the authorities of this period were so corrupt, they had not entirely lost all shame of the abominations, for the prophet says, “they wrap it up.” All were busy in artful endeavors to conceal from others the wickedness of their conduct. Now the endeavor of these people to wrap up their sin in concealment is worthy our attention for several reasons, because it is *general*, *wicked*, and *unwise*.

I. BECAUSE IT IS GENERAL. Sin seems to have in it an instinct of self-concealment ; it cannot bear the light. Like the noxious reptiles of the earth, it shrinks from observation. Hence, no sooner does a man commit a sin than he seeks “to wrap it up.”

First: *He seeks to “wrap it up” from society.* The sight of men wrapping up their sin is as common as it is sad. In all grades of society, in all departments of action, men are active in wrapping up their sin. The dishonest tradesman wraps up the thousand sins of his daily avaricious life, in the bland smile, the cringing bow, and the false statement which he makes to his customers. Every parcel he delivers to the purchaser

is wrapt up in falsehood. In the professions, you have the same wrapping. The lawyer, the physician, the priest, each has his sins, and each has his method of wrapping them up. Candidates for public offices will "wrap up" the sinful wishes that prompt them to seek the post, by many an avowal of patriotism and benevolence, as false as they are fair. So, through the social realm, the thief wraps up his thefts, the liar his lies, the debauchee his infamies, the impostor his falsehood, the murderer his murders,—all as best they can. This general "wrapping up" of our sins from the eyes of our fellow-men, shows the *essential hideousness of sin*. The conscience of universal man feels that it is an execrable thing, therefore he seeks to conceal it. In truth, were sinful man to show his real wicked heart to his fellow, the confidence of a corrupt community would be utterly destroyed. Such public confidence and social order as prevail in a world of corrupt souls, are founded on deception.

Secondly : *He seeks to "wrap it up" from his own conscience.* This the sinner does by specious excuses which he offers to himself for his wickedness. Sometimes he will seek to "wrap" his sin in the garb of custom, so as to hide its enormity from his conscience, and he hopes that the custom of his trade or his profession will justify his doings. Sometimes he will "wrap" his sin in the infirmities of men who have been regarded as good, and he will seek to satisfy conscience by reference to the imperfections of men, whom the world, the Church, and even the Bible itself, canonize as saints. Sometimes he will endeavor to "wrap up" his sin of religious neglect, by promises of improvement in a future time, as Felix did of old. Thus, in various ways, men endeavor to conceal by various wrappings the enormity of sin from their own consciences.

The endeavor of this people to wrap up their sin is important to notice :—

II. BECAUSE IT IS WICKED. It is adding sin to sin ; the concealment of a sin is a double sin. By wrapping a sin up,

however strong may be your motives for doing so, you enhance the guilt, and make the matter worse. Instead of destroying, you strengthen and multiply sin, by endeavoring to conceal it. The serpent hatches its brood under the cover.

First : *Concealing sin is a sin against our constitution.* We are organized to be open and revealing, we have organs made to reveal fully and faithfully what is in us, and our natural instincts urge us to this revelation. We are made to appear what we are, not what we are not. When we appear to others what we are not, we do violence to the nature that God has given us. If we have sinned, let us crawl as the hideous serpent, not assume the gait of an angel.

Secondly : *Concealing sin is a sin against society.* We have no right to appear to others what we are not. The hypocrite is of all forgers the most wicked and dangerous. It is true, as we have intimated, that were all men in a corrupt generation fully to unfold to each other their depravity, there would be an end to the kind of social order that now prevails. But better have social anarchy with honesty, than social peace built on falsehood. Better that the child who has committed a crime against his father, should, by confessing it, have the frowning brow and indignant word of his offended sire, than live under an approving smile, which his crime had forfeited; better for both parties.

Thirdly : *Concealing sin is a sin against God.* It is an insult to His omniscience. His eye is everywhere. No wrappage can conceal from Him. "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord," (Jer. xxiii. 24.) "Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering." (Job xxvi. 6.) "There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves." (Job xxxiv. 22.) "The eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil and the good." (Prov. xv. 3.) "He revealeth the deep and secret things: He knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him." (Dan. ii. 22.) The man, therefore, who endeavors to wrap up his sins in concealment, not only ignores, but insults

the omniscience of the Eternal. The endeavor of these people to wrap up their sins is important to notice :—

III. BECAUSE IT IS UNWISE.

First : *The endeavor must inevitably prove fruitless.* Even here, circumstances often occur in a man's history to bring out to the full view of his contemporaries his hidden sins. The wrappage gets rent, and the unsathed monster leaps into the light, and men shudder. "Murder will out ;" and not only murder. Yes, and to a man's own conscience here, often by the force of moral conviction, all the monsters are unwrapped. The eye of the awakened conscience sends its fiery glance through all, and "sin appears exceedingly sinful." But in the future there will be a full and complete unfoldment. Fold after fold, however intricately and numerously winded round the evil thing, will be unloosed and thrown away in the flames of the last day. "God will bring every work into judgment with every secret thing." (Eccles. xii. 14.) "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed." (Matt. x. 26.) "In that day, the judge will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts. (1 Cor. iv. 5.)

Secondly : *The endeavor is eternally inimical to happiness.* The child who commits a crime against his parents, will move in wretched gloom in the happy circle of love, so long as he seeks to wrap up his offence. Let him confess it in tears, and the dark cloud will break, and the sun will shine again into his heart. Thus David felt, "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long." (Psalm xxxii. 3.) "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh, shall have mercy."

Thirdly : *The endeavor, if persisted in, will involve in unutterable ruin.* Though you should succeed in so wrapping up your sins from your fellow-men, that you be regarded here as a model citizen and a distinguished saint, no sooner will you pass into eternity than the imposture will blaze out in the unquenchable fires of perdition.

Brother, learn from this, that all sinners are almost necessary hypocrites. Goodness in man begins in tearing off the wrappages in which sin is concealed, and penitentially confessing the wickedness before God. When sin is thus renounced, and Christian virtue cultivated, man is able to live an unhyprocritic life before his fellow-men. Until that, all is falsehood, and alas the social world is fraught with falsehood. "A lie," says a great modern writer, "should be trampled on and extinguished wherever found. I am for fumigating the atmosphere when I suspect that falsehood, like pestilence, breathes around me."



SUBJECT :—*The Pool of Siloam ; or, the World in Miniature.*

"After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water : whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he said unto him, Wilt thou be made whole ? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool : but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked : and on the same day was the sabbath."—John v. 1—9.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Eightieth.

AS to the season when the deeply-interesting event recorded in this passage occurred, we have no other information than that recorded in the first verse. It was at a "*feast of the Jews.*" Whether it was the Feast of the Passover, or of Pentecost, or of Purim, is a question that has been much debated among critics, and is still unsolved. The point is of no practical moment. It was on some great

religious festival of sufficient importance to attract the presence of the Son of God. As to the *scene*, we are informed that it was at Bethesda. The word signifies "house of mercy," so called, perhaps, on account of the sanitary effects of the water upon those who resorted thither for relief. "The pool probably was a pentagon or of a five-sided form, and had 'five porches around it,' as spaces of shelter for those who resorted thither to bathe or be cured." It was hard by the sheep-market at Jerusalem, the place where the sheep were obtained for the use of the temple. (Neh. iii. 1.)

It is certainly legitimate, and might, we trust, be profitable to look on the scene before us as a kind of miniature portrait of the human world, as it ever has been since the introduction of sin, and as it is at this hour. In looking at the narrative thus, we observe :—

I. THAT THE HUMAN WORLD IS GREATLY AFFLICTED. Here we see "a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered." These words declare that a multitude of afflicted men were there. It was the great resort of the suffering. The afflicted crowded round those waters in search of cure. Mankind, the world over, are subjects of suffering in some form or other. The seeds of disease and death work in every human frame. All hearts are exposed to the agonies of disappointment, and to the poignant pangs of social bereavement; moral remorse and terrible forebodings agitate at some time or other the consciences of all. The world is in suffering. Battle-fields, slavery, superstitions, tortures, work-houses, hospitals, prisons, funeral processions, and teeming cemeteries, all show this. Suffering is the back-ground in the great picture of human life. The music of the world's great heart is in the minor key; its deepest breath is a wail, and its history is a drama, tragic in the extreme. Two general remarks may be made concerning the afflictions of mankind.

First: *They are ever the effects of sin.* Human suffering does not well up as a natural fountain from the constitution of things. "It is sin that hath brought death into our

world, and all our woe." Every suffering has its root in wrong, every groan is the breath of sin. The inseparable connection between sin and suffering is as benevolent as it is just. The well-being of the universe requires it. To quench hell so long as sin reigns, would be an injury to the creation.

Secondly : *They are sometimes the means of holiness.* To those whose hearts are under the reign of grace, who have come into the school of Christ and family of God, afflictions are blessings in disguise. "They yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness to those who are exercised thereby." They are the chastening rod and the curative cup. "Our light afflictions which are but for a moment," &c.

II. THAT THE HUMAN WORLD HAS ALLEVIATING ELEMENTS. These sufferers were now found in connection with *remedial* agencies. There were the sanitary waters, and there was the descending angel. "An angel went down at a certain season into the pool and troubled the water : and whoso then first, after the troubling of the water, stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had." Some say that the pool had *naturally* those medicinal virtues adapted to effect the cure of those who resorted to it, and that the angel here is nothing more than a messenger who came periodically to stir up the healing virtues of the water. Others maintain that the healing virtue was altogether *supernatural*, and that an angel from heaven literally descended to give to it a virtue to cure the diseases of those assembled. The fact stated that "whosoever then first, after the troubling of the water, stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had," inclines us to the latter idea. In any case the point suggested to us is true, namely, that suffering man is here found in connection with alleviating elements. This world is indeed a Bethesda, "a house of mercy." There are healing waters rippling at the feet of the sufferer. Amongst the alleviating elements of this world we may mention :—

First : *The medicinal properties of the earth.* Science has discovered much in the vegetable and the animal kingdoms

to remove many of the physical diseases of mankind, and to mitigate in some degree the pains of most. Science may, perhaps, one day discover in this earth antidotes for all our physical afflictions. We may mention :—

Secondly : *The soothing influences of nature.* There is much in the bright sky, the green fields, the wooded hills, the yellow shore and the blue wave, the beauty of the garden and the grandeur of the forest, the music of the river and the chorus of the groves, to allay the anguish of our suffering nature. We may mention :—

Thirdly : *The offices of social love.* Corrupt as the world is, it has not dried up the fountain of social affection. This pours forth its healing streams in every social circle. Kind words, loving looks, and tender hands of ministering sympathy contribute much to the alleviation of human woe. We may mention :—

Fourthly : *The blessed Gospel of Christ.* This is, indeed, the great panacea. It has “a sovereign balm for every wound, a cordial for our fear.” This, however, at present, is not universally available. Men of Christendom only stand within the porches of this Bethesda. Blessed be Heaven for these alleviating circumstances. Suffering humanity here has the means of restoration.

III. THAT THE HUMAN WORLD IS PRE-EMINENTLY SELFISH. At the side of these healing waters there was one man “which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, “Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool ; *but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.*” No man out of the vast multitude would help this poor man into the pool, and while he was endeavoring to step in, others rushed in before him and left him to suffer on. Every man for himself. One might have thought that if they were too selfish to help such a sufferer before themselves, that on their

return from the waters they would have done so. But no ! each cared for himself. Sad picture this ; yet it is a picture of the world's real life. Men are pre-eminently selfish, and this is the most lamentable fact in their history, inasmuch as it is the essence of that sin which is the cause of all their woe. Selfishness is not a regard for our own interest, but a disregard to the interest of others. It is natural and right to take care of self, but it is unnatural and wrong to be so taken up with self as to neglect the claim of others. Selfishness is *injustice*. The man who is taken up entirely with himself commits an injustice against society by keeping back powers which should be employed in its service. Selfishness is *impiety*. The selfish man makes self his god. Desire for self-gratification, and not the will of the Infinite, is his ruling law. Self so fills up his horizon that God Himself is not seen. Selfishness is *misery*. All the fiendish passions which are the furies of hell, spring from selfishness. Envy, jealousy, revenge, remorse, terror, are its brood. Now this unjust, impious, miserable power is the great law of the human world. Every man is in earnest for himself. To destroy this kingdom of selfishness—the kingdom of the devil—is the grand mission of Christ.

IV. THAT THE HUMAN WORLD HAS A GLORIOUS DELIVERER. One who now appeared amongst the suffering multitude spoke to the poor impotent man, and said to him, “ Rise, take up thy bed and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked.”

First : *This Deliverer cures the greatest of all human sufferers*. Not one, perhaps, amongst the afflicted multitude, was more afflicted than the one that Christ cured. His infirmity had lasted thirty-eight years ; a whole generation of men had come and gone during the period of his affliction. Christ is mighty to save.

Secondly : *This Deliverer cures by virtue of His own word*.

“ Take up thy bed and walk.” These omnific words carried the curative element into this man's being. He did

not put the man into the pool ; He only spoke. " His word is the power of God unto salvation." " And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed (pallet, a small mattress) and walked." The man walked in all the vigor of manly strength.

Thirdly : *This Deliverer cures in concurrence with the will of the patient.* Wilt thou ? Wilt thou have thy ignorance, prejudices, guilt, selfishness, &c., removed.

Blessed be God, this glorious Deliverer is still in our world. To every suffering man He says, " Wilt thou be whole ?" And all who return the earnest affirmative, He heals. The mighty Physician is able and willing to cure all diseases that afflict our fallen race.



SUBJECT :—*Religion ; or God's Work in Man.*

" Being confident of this very thing," &c.—Philippians i. 6.

Analysis of Bomily the Six Hundred and Ninetycenth.

THERE are two interpretations given to this text. (1) That St. Paul refers to the introduction of the Gospel at Philippi. This " good work " should never be forsaken, having been commenced. (2) That he refers to the " good work " of grace in the hearts of the believing Philippians. This having been begun, would be carried on and perfected in the day of Jesus Christ. In either case our remarks will hold good :—

I. THAT RELIGION IN THE SOUL IS GOD'S WORK. Religion in man consists of four things :—First : *Right thoughts in the intellect.* " How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God ! how great is the sum of them." God's thoughts are in the intellect of the Christian. Secondly : *Right feelings in the heart.* These are pure and supreme affection for God. " We love him," &c. Thirdly : *Right principles in the conscience.* Religion enthrones conscience upon the principles of truth and righteousness. Fourthly : *Right actions.* These thoughts, desires, and principles, must be

translated into holy actions. Religion is God-life on earth. The possession of it involves a stupendous change, equal to the creation of the world out of chaos. This God effects. When done, the man's state before God is altered. He is justified in Christ, and made a part of the Divine family. He is a citizen of heaven. He is regenerate. This work is the basis of progressive sanctification. The work is done according to a Divine plan, the development of which involved the sacrifice of life the most valuable ; and the agency of God the Holy Ghost. The inward world of mind and heart being set right, the outward life is beautiful ; hence God always commences His work in the soul. The royal King of Israel said—"Thou desirest truth in the inward parts ; and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom."

II. That religion in the soul is God's EXCELLENT work. "He which hath begun a good work in you." First : *It is the basis of right character.* Right character is constituted of purity, love, and truth. To be pure in thought and look, to love God and man until our nature expands into a philanthropy that grasps humanity ; to be true, and to hate every form of falsehood ; to live bravely above it, although residing in the midst of it ; to look at creation as filled with our wrecked brethren and sisters, and to love them with a boundless charity ; that is rightness of character—and Christianity in the soul is the foundation of it. Secondly : *It is the only guarantee and qualification for the fulfilment of all the duties of life.* Religion purifies the heart ; and a pure-minded parent, servant, statesman, or professional man, is the only one who can sanctify and elevate the circle of his movements. He is like a river that runs through the valley, to bless it with its refreshing waters. He is a tree of life. Thirdly : *It is an elementary preparation for future glory.* His soul is the spiritual paradise regained by the second Adam—the Lord from Heaven—and that corresponds to the external paradise it is to inherit in eternity. Religion in the soul, therefore,

is a Divine and transcendently excellent work, a guarantee that its possessor shall inherit the peerless glories and deathless joys of heaven.

III. That religion in the soul is God's excellent work CONSTANTLY PROGRESSING. "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it," &c. Three thoughts at least are suggested by this part of our subject:—First: *The great capacity of the human soul for growth in goodness.* It is capable of endless advancement in the religion of the cross. There are boundless and indestructible potentialities in mind to be unfolded and cultured by the mighty scheme of redemption for ever. Secondly: *The magnificence of the Christian religion.* It meets all the emergencies of man's present existence, and provides an imperishable immortality for his future being. There is an eternal scope for the growth of man in the Gospel of truth and love. Through it he towers from glory to glory. Thirdly: *The personal attention bestowed by God upon every redeemed soul.* What is good in man has God for its author. "Of his own will begat he us," &c. This good is strengthened day by day. God performs His work without intermission. He plants the flower of grace, and cultures it into one of glory.

IV. That religion in the soul is God's excellent work constantly progressing TO A GLORIOUS CONSUMMATION. "He . . . will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Will perform it, are words that mean He will complete it. It will receive the highest perfection. First: *At the judgment day.* This will be a great and glorious day. Christ will then appear as the sublime monarch of the universe, and the arbiter of human destiny. Secondly: *The fact upon which the certainty of its perfection rests is the fidelity of God to His work.* Goodness in man dates its origin to God, and He never forsakes the works of His own hands. In all the massive worlds that move in the immensity of space, not one is half finished or forsaken. The conclusion is, therefore,

that the ray of Christian light in the soul, will one day radiate the entire circle of the heavens of man's being, in all the perfection and blaze of noontide glory. Thirdly : *To fulfil and execute the Divine plans and designs.* Goodness in man is not produced by chance—but is the intelligent working out of a Divine plan. If the sun in yonder sky were quenched in midnight darkness, just as it was unfolding its beams, Heaven's plan would be frustrated. Were the sun of redemptive love to be put out in the soul—by the clouds of sin—then it seems to us that the great purposes and plans of God would be frustrated. Fourthly : *To illustrate the Divinity of the Bible.* “The exceeding great and precious promises” of the Word of Truth, to believers, would lose all their grandeur and meaning to us, without the Christian reaching his destiny. A ransomed and beatified spirit, standing erect, clothed with immortal beauty before the throne of God, is the sublimest illustration of those words, that heaven and earth may pass away, but that not one jot nor tittle of God's word shall go unfulfilled. Darkness may and does surround the question, but every conflict, disappointment, and trial, is only tending to the spread and deepening of the foundations of that kingdom of goodness in the soul, whose peerless beauty and majesty shall last—when, from the wreck and ruin of suns and systems, there shall have emerged a glorious paradise for the sons of God. Our prayer is that Heaven may raise what is low within us, strengthen what is weak, and illumine what is dark, until from the Pisgah of truth we can sing, “Being confident of this very thing,” &c.

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SUBJECT :—*The Colloquy of Penitence and Mercy.*

“And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”—Luke xxiii. 42, 43.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Twentieth.

IN the life of Christ, extremes—dignity and degradation—met. That union of extremes became more intimate as His life drew to a close. On Calvary it reached its climax. In the circumstances of a dying *malefactor*, Jesus exercises the prerogatives of *God*.

I. THE PRAYER OF PENITENCE. “Lord, remember,” &c. Some prayers come from the surface of our hearts ; they are like bubbles on the surface of the sea. Some prayers come from the depths of our nature ; they are like pearls from the ocean’s bed. Of this latter kind is the prayer of the penitent thief. It is a type of all true prayer, especially the prayer of contrition.

First : *It manifests a just appreciation of the Saviour’s character.* “Lord, remember me when thou comest into *thy* kingdom.” Circumstances often assist a man’s faith. An unbeliever, when dying, will often embrace any creed you like to give him. Though this penitent would probably have been both unwilling and dull if the disciples had attempted to teach him of the Messiahship of Jesus—yet, in prospect of death, it seems to be easy and natural for him to offer a prayer in which he recognizes in Jesus the King of the spiritual world.

Secondly : *It is borne on the wings of a resistless faith.* The faith of a penitent is liable to be staggered by three questions. (1) *Am I coming in an acceptable manner?* I have not had Saul’s blindness, nor the jailor’s agony, nor Mary’s tearfulness. Am I right? The thief’s faith answered this question. The foundation of his faith was a consciousness that he was approaching Jesus in the best way he knew

of. When our prayers and penitence are *honest*, they are acceptable. (2) *Can Jesus save me?* If ever the power of Christ to save were doubtful, it was so on Calvary. If the malefactor had confidence in saying to Jesus *crucified*, "Lord, remember me," much more confidence may we have in sending up the breathings of our contrition to Christ *glorified*. (3) *Will Jesus save me?* If ever man might reasonably have doubted the willingness of the Saviour to receive, the thief might. He came with crimes enough to crowd a lifetime; and he came in haste, without an hour's repentance. But his faith soars above the mountain of his sins. If such a character might have confidence, towards Christ who may not? We may.

Thirdly: *It bears the stamp of earnestness.* It is probable that this prayer was not uttered in a loud voice. This prayer was heard by few, but how earnest it is! See ye not the man's earnestness in—(1) *The subject of his prayer.* When people came to Jesus, it was generally for temporal good. Here is a suppliant who stands in greater need of temporal good than anyone who had previously applied to the Lord; yet this man prays about his soul only. If his spiritual earnestness made him look upon the agony of crucifixion as a secondary matter, how great was that earnestness! And see ye not his earnestness in—(2) *The smallness of his request.* Some may think that the more earnest a suppliant is the more he will ask for. Hardly so. Instance the beggar who demands gold to save himself from immediate starvation. The prayer of the wife of Zebedee, if offered by this man, would not have proved the existence of any deep yearnings for mercy. Was the Magdalene in earnest? the Syrophenician! the publican? Even more so the man who asks—not a throne—not even a place—but merely that the Saviour will cast back a passing thought to the poor wretch who perished at his side.

II. THE RESPONSE OF MERCY. "Verily I say," &c. We shall not enter unto a critical consideration of this word

“paradise.” It could not be contained in the corner of a discourse. Be it sufficient to say that paradise always has reference to a state of pleasure. View rather the glory of the mercy which promises paradise to the penitent.

First: *Jesus did not hesitate.* The Church shrunk from receiving Saul into its communion. Probably the Church now would keep a “penitent thief” standing at the gate. Jesus did not; He answered promptly. Penitent! if the Church does not know thy heart, Christ does! If the Church shrinks from recognizing thee among the saved, Christ does not!

Secondly: *Jesus did not upbraid.* The Pharisees would. Many churches of this day would. If Christ had done so, we should not have wondered. But He seems to think that the man’s conscience upbraided him enough. Penitent, the Church may upbraid thee; the Saviour will not! Having His smile, thou canst afford to bear their frowns.

Thirdly: *Jesus did not impose any condition.* What a host of conditions are imposed on penitent sinners by some churches! The Lord imposes but one. With Him, “Behold he prayeth,” is enough. Penitent, if it has been recorded concerning thee, “Behold he prayeth,” thou wilt surely hear the “response of mercy.” (1) *A lesson of warning* against presumption. (2) *A lesson of encouragement*, against despair.

J. K. JACKSON.



Biblical Exegesis.

John xxi. 15—17.

Ὅτε οὖν ἠρίστησαν

λέγει τῷ Σίμωνι Πέτρῳ ὁ Ἰησοῦς

(i) Σίμων Ἰῶνα, ἀγαπᾷς με πλεον τούτων ;

Λέγει αὐτῷ

(1) Ναί, Κύριε, σὺ οἶδας ὅτι φιλῶ σε.

Λέγει αὐτῷ

(a) Βόσκε τὰ ἀρνία μου.

Λέγει αὐτῷ πάλιν δεύτερον

(ii) Σίμων Ἰωνᾶ, ἀγαπᾷς με ;

Λέγει αὐτῷ

(2) Ναί, Κύριε, σὺ οἶδας ὅτι φιλῶ σε.

Λέγει αὐτῷ

(b) Ποίμαινε τὰ πρόβατά μου.

Λέγει αὐτῷ τὸ τρίτον

(iii) Σίμων Ἰωνα, φιλεῖς με ;

Ἐλυπήθη ὁ Πέτρος, ὅτι εἶπεν αὐτῷ τὸ τρίτον· Φιλεῖς με ;

καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ

(3) Κύριε, σὺ πάντα οἶδας· σὺ γινώσκεις ὅτι φιλῶ σε.

Λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς·

(c) Βόσκε τὰ πρόβατά μου.

THE reader will see that we have marked our Lord's three questions to Peter (i), (ii), and (iii) ; Peter's three answers (1), (2), and (3) ; and our Lord's three replies (a), (b), and (c).

It is observable that in (i), (ii), and (iii), and in (1), (2), and (3), the same word is not used throughout, as the constant appearance of the verb *love* in our version leads the English reader to suppose. Two words are used, ἀγαπᾶν and φιλεῖν. In (i) and (ii) it is ἀγαπᾶς, in (iii) φιγεῖς; and in (1), (2), and (3), φιλῶ is used throughout. The fact is worthy of attention and investigation, though to have indicated it in the English version might have been difficult if not impossible, and though also the reason of the variation may not be obvious.

In the Vulgate ἀγαπᾶν is represented by *diligere*, and φιλεῖν by *amare*; *diligere* carrying a reference to the judgment, *amare* rather to the feelings. (Bengel unaccountably reverses this, putting *amare* for ἀγαπᾶν and *diligere* for φιλεῖν. Sometimes even good Homer nods.) De Wette renders ἀγαπᾶν by *lieben*, to love, and φιλεῖν by *liebhaben*, to hold dear.

Both ἀγαπᾶν and φιλεῖν are employed in the Septuagint as renderings of the Hebrew *ahav*. The former seems to be used when it is intended to suggest *that there is a reason for the affection*. Thus: "Isaac loved (ἠγάπησε) Esau, because he did eat of his venison," Gen. xxv. 28; but of the venison he said—xxvii. 4—"such as *I am fond of*," (ὥς φιλῶ ἐγὼ), that is, for its own sake, without further reason. Wisdom also says, Prov. viii. 17, ἐγὼ τοὺς ἐμὲ φιλοῦντας ἀγαπῶ, "*I love those who hold me dear*," the latter being the reason of the former. In the New Testament the use appears to be similar, but we have not space for expansion. The substantive ἀγάπη does not occur in Pagan writers, but it is found fifteen times in the Septuagint. It is used much oftener in the New Testament, where it is indeed a characteristic word, and is translated *love* or *charity*, excepting in one or two places where it stands for an early Christian *feast*. The word *φιλία* is only once in the New Testament—James iv. 4, ἡ φιλία τοῦ κόσμου, κ. τ. λ.—"*the friendship of the world is enmity with God*." The adjectives have analogous significations. Jesus is the Father's "*Beloved Son*," ὁ υἱὸς μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, that is, one perfectly approved of, as explained by the following clause, "*in whom I am well pleased*." Matt. iii. 17, and the three parallel passages. Lazarus was the φίλος of Jesus and the disciples, John xi. 11. John is called both ὁ μαθητὴς ἐκείνος ὃν ἠγάπα ὁ Ἰησοῦς, John xxi. 7; and

also τὸν ἄλλον μαθητὴν ὃν ἐφίλει ὁ Ἰησοῦς, xx. 2. Jesus *approved* of him, and also had a *personal affection* for him. Jesus ἡγάπησεν the young ruler, Mark x. 21, for his ingenuous earnestness.

Without asserting that there is a sharp and definite line between the words ἀγαπᾶν and φιλεῖν, and that their meanings are mutually exclusive, we may say that the former has a reason at its basis, is either *complacency* or *pity*, and that the core of the latter is a feeling less conscious of reason. In the ἀγαπᾶν there is something rather impersonal and spiritual, in the φιλεῖν something personal and human.* As ἀγαπή is excited towards God in view of His characteristic attributes, and towards man for the highest reasons, φιλία is inspired by the Incarnate Son, is the affection which responds to the charm of Jesus. 1 Cor. xvi. 22. "If any man love not (οὐ φιλεῖ) the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha."

We cannot then think with Augustin,+ Grotius and Bengel, that ἀγαπᾶν and φιλεῖν are used here for one and the same thing. To apply the above principle to our passage. The Lord first (i) asks Simon ἀγαπᾷς με; dost thou love me with the highest, wisest and holiest affection? Peter in answer (1) modestly uses the other word, φιλω σε, "Thou art unspeakably dear to me. I love thee with a love I have not analyzed, and will not venture to characterize." The second time (ii) the Lord repeats the former ἀγαπᾷς, to which Peter again replies with φιλω (2). It is not until the *third* time that the Divine Questioner accepts the word of the disciple, and asks (iii) φιλεῖς με; "Hast thou that tender, personal affection for me which thou sayest?" We cannot enlarge, but simply indicate for the reader's reflection

* Dean Trench says, (Synonyms, First Series, p. 47), that "while men are continually bidden ἀγαπᾶν τὸν Θεόν (Matt. xxii. 37; Luke x. 27; 1 Cor. viii. 3), and good men declared to do so (Rom. viii. 28; 1 Pet. i. 8; 1 John iv. 21), the φιλεῖν τὸν Θεόν is commanded to them never." Yet, not to speak of the Septuagint of Prov. viii. 17, quoted above, the Apostle Paul, 2 Tim. iii. 4, reckons amongst heinous transgressors those who should be φιλήδονοι μᾶλλον ἢ φιλόθεοι fonder of pleasure than of God." And St. James ii. 23, commends Abraham as φίλος Θεοῦ. These are not indeed direct commands; but the command is in both instances implied; in the one in the condemnation, in the other in the approval.

+ Tract. 123, in Joan.

variation of words, which to allow to escape unnoticed were to lose half the coloring of the colloquy.

We have also to remark in this passage the two verbs, βόσκει and ποιμαίνει, whose diversity has been lost in our version by the use of the one word *feed*. The verb βόσκειν is to *feed* or *pasture*; ποιμαίνειν refers rather to the *guidance* and *protection* which belong to a shepherd. The latter word is used by the Lord (b) appropriately in connexion with *sheep*, which, grown up, silly and self-willed, require very careful government. The former is connected with both *lambs* and *sheep* (a), (c), since whilst lambs certainly and emphatically need nourishment, the matured sheep also require it, though in a different way. In the last of the Lord's three charges (c), Alford reads προβάτῳ, *little sheep*; but Stier reads the three in progression thus: ἀρνία, προβάτια, πρόβατα, *lambs, little sheep, sheep*. Tischendorf reads προβάτια in both (b) and (c). The manuscript authority does not seem sufficiently decisive to oblige or warrant departure from the usual reading in either (b) or (c).

We conclude with a few scattered hints. The verb ἀριστάω does not refer to dinner in the present sense of that word. Perhaps in the time of our translators the verb to *dine* had a more indefinite meaning. The time was early morning, ver. 4, and this meal was breakfast. So De Wette says *Da sie nun gefrühstückt hatten*; but this in English would injure the dignity of the passage.

Jesus now calls the disciple, not *Peter*, the name given him by his denied Lord, but *Simon*, his natural name, and *son of Jonas*, as if to emphasize the reference to his natural condition. It was *Simon, son of Jonas*, not *Peter, the Rock*, that had erred. This allusion must have touched him to the quick.

The πλείον τοῦτων of (i) is almost universally understood to mean, more than these *thy fellow disciples*. It may allude to Peter's impetuous plunge into the water, as well as to his confident profession of superior firmness shortly before he proved his weakness by denial. The allusion to the latter must have been felt as a reproof in which severity and kindness were Divinely blent. Peter's arrogance is by this time cured, and he simply answers καὶ κύριε, σὺ οἶσθα ὅτι φιλῶ σε. He appeals from his own self-knowledge to Christ's power to read his heart and discern there the affection which He

had inspired. The *three* questions of the Lord are kindly intended to give Peter an opportunity of a threefold recantation, before the disciples, of his threefold denial: and if he was "grieved" when the question came a third time, his sorrowful recollection could not hinder his appreciation of the intended kindness. Observe also the delicacy which, while giving the opportunity of full contradiction, and thus assuring him of forgiveness, avoided direct reference to the past. Augustin says,* "The threefold confession is yielded for the threefold denial; that his tongue might not serve love less than fear, nor the danger of death appear to have drawn forth more than the presence of Life." Chrysostom says,† "Thrice He questions, and thrice He enjoins the same, showing how highly He estimates the presidency of His sheep, and because this especially is a mark of love towards Him."

Formerly, Christ had called Peter to be "a fisher of men;" and by this second miraculous draught He brought that call to mind. But the figure is now changed. The apostolic office, which is the highest form of the Christian ministry, is not for conversion only, but for training; not for catching only, but for feeding, protecting, and governing.

My lambs, my sheep. "Some unfaithful servants," says Augustin,‡ "have arisen who have divided Christ's flock, and by theft have appropriated sheep to themselves; and you hear them say, 'Those sheep are mine, what are you doing with my sheep? Let me not find you with my sheep.' If thus we call the sheep ours, and they call them theirs, Christ hath lost His sheep."

The following translation is intended only to help the illustration of the points we have indicated:—

So when they had eaten

Jesus saith to Simon Peter

(i) Simon son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?

He saith unto Him

(1) Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I hold thee dear.

He saith unto him

(a) Feed my lambs.

He saith to him again the second time

* Tract. 123 in Joan. † Homil. 87, in Joan. ‡ Serm. Passion.

- (ii) Simon son of Jonas, lovest thou me ?
He saith unto Him
- (2) Yea, Lord ; thou knowest that I hold thee dear.
He saith unto him
- (b) Tend my sheep.
He saith unto him the third time
- (iii) Simon son of Jonas, holdest thou me dear ?
Peter was grieved because He spake unto him the third
time, Holdest thou me dear ?
And he spake unto Him
- (3) Lord, thou knowest all things ; thou knowest that I
hold thee dear.
Jesus saith unto him
- (c) Feed my sheep.

The Christian Year.

BY A CLERGYMAN.

The Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity.

“ And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed ? but where are the nine ? ”—Luke xvii. 17.

THE disease of leprosy is one of the very worst with which human nature has ever been afflicted. It was not only most destructive in character, but accompanied with a peculiar ghastly appearance, and thus the victim of it was rendered an object at once of loathing and pity. It was incurable by human skill, and the leper was regarded as already given over to death. When the leprosy had been introduced by the Crusaders into these Western parts, it was usual to cover the leper with a shroud, and to perform for him a funeral service as for one already dead.

By the law of Moses this disease was selected as a peculiar emblem of sin ; the leper was to be separated from the congregation of the people of the Lord, and all contact with him was to be avoided. The Divine Ruler sometimes inflicted leprosy as a punishment for sins of a peculiarly heinous, and especially, of a rebellious character. Thus, in Numb. xii., we read that Miriam was so punished for seditious conduct towards Moses. David cursed Joab's family with it for the murder of Abner, 2 Sam. iii. 29. Gehazi, Elisha's servant, was punished with leprosy for lying to Naaman the Syrian, and to his own master. And King Uzziah was smitten with leprosy for impiety, 2 Chron. xxvi. 19.

By reason, therefore, of the dreadful nature and the peculiar significance of this disease, *it was becoming that lepers should be prominent amongst the objects of the beneficent miracles of Jesus the Christ.* He was the Saviour from sin, and He would, therefore, be the Healer of leprosy, which was regarded as the outward and visible sign of sin—of sin, that is, not of the individual, but of the race. Accordingly, when John the Baptist sent to inquire concerning His claim to the Messiahship, this was one of the facts which Jesus enumerated to establish faith in Himself : “The lepers are cleansed.”

As the Lord Jesus was now travelling on the border-land between Samaria and Galilee on His way to Jerusalem, and was entering a village, He was met by a company of ten men, who constituted a sad community of affliction. Of these, one at least was a Samaritan ; but, although Jews and Samaritans usually held aloof from each other, in this case, *a common calamity*, separating them alike from the rest of the world, formed them, forgetful of national and religious jealousies, into a fellowship of misery. Affliction will often bring together those who in prosperity are divided. If, in any measure, it lessens our pride, or renders us sympathizing and companionable, it must be acknowledged to be a blessing.

These ten men “stood afar off,” in obedience to the law, which forbade contact between lepers and sound men. Yet,

being thoroughly in earnest for deliverance, they caught at the possibility of receiving aid from Jesus, and with a degree of faith and hope, "lifted up their voices." Then Jesus, "filled with compassion," as He had been in the case of the one leper, resolved on healing them. He took, however, a remarkable course, by way, perhaps, of trying their faith. "Go," said He, "shew yourselves unto the priests." The recovered leper was bound by the law to shew himself to the priests, that they might pronounce him cured. These ten, before they saw in themselves any symptoms of restoration to health, were to undertake a journey, *relying on the Lord's word*, trusting that He would not mock them, but if they obeyed, would indeed effectuate their cure. We may easily imagine that some of the more sceptical among them might be inclined to demur. "What! start for Jerusalem before we know that we are healed? Suppose that the power of Jesus were unable to reach us from a distance; or, that He be really intending only to deceive us. We should then be merely exposing our folly and subjecting ourselves to ridicule." It was certainly a trial of faith. Yet, however the sceptical may have demurred, the counsel of the more believing prevailed, and they all went together.

"As they went they were cleansed," as He had intended, whose power and mercy were as near and as effectual, whether they were in His presence or not. *As they went.* The path of faith and obedience is the path of health. Let us believe in Him in whose name we are baptized. Without captious objection or dispute of His word, *let us show to His Church and to all men that we are cleansed.* This is the road whereby simple hearts travel to the blessing.

Great must have been the wonder and joy of these men when they saw and felt that their dreadful disease was indeed gone, and that they were once more sound, redeemed from a certain and painful, though lingering, death. But, alas! with one happy exception, *great was not their gratitude.*

Unthankfulness, particularly for the many and great mercies we receive from God, *is, it is to be feared, a very*

general sin. But it is not the less heinous. When we are sore distress and have no other refuge, we are sometimes driven to call upon God. It is a good thing to be driven, even by trouble, to our Father in heaven. The greatest privilege we have is praying to God. None ever call upon Him in vain. If it is sin that troubles us, He forgives us and grants us His peace. If earthly calamity; then, if we ask in becoming submission to His will, He either removes the calamity, or He wonderfully calms and strengthens, and thus answers our prayer. He delights to be applied to as the Refuge of the distress. He encourages us to appeal to Him: "Call upon me in the time of trouble; so will I hear thee, and thou shalt praise me."

It is, however, far easier to pray for the removal of a burthen than to give thanks for relief. Such is our base weakness that we are often disposed, by the very enjoyment of good, to forget the Hand that bestows it. When creatures fail us, we fly to God; when He relieves us, we attribute it to creatures. Surely this calls aloud for repentance.

Jesus said, "Where there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?" He speaks with surprise and grief, *that the unthankful should be the majority, and should, moreover, be such as by their Jewish privileges ought to have learnt better.* Their ingratitude is hard to account for, hard even to conceive. When Naaman was cleansed, he returned to the prophet with impetuous thankfulness, and profuse and importunate offers of remuneration. Perhaps these nine were in haste to be pronounced clean by the priests. Or, it may be, that they wished not to linger on the scene where every object would remind them of the past. But, instead of wasting reproach upon them, let us remember with shame our own similar ingratitude. Have we given thanks as we ought for daily and nightly support, succour, and defence; for protection in numberless perils known and unknown; for numberless favors; for our Christian birth and for Christian institutions; for that inestimable love of God in His Son which these institutions witness, and whose manifestation they repeat

evermore? We may well fear, that, were Christ amongst us now, He would but too often ask sorrowfully as of old, "*Where are the nine?*" Lord, they have forgotten thee; their hearts are elsewhere; taken up with anything rather than giving Thee thanks. Ah, brethren! faithful memories would find in past unthankfulness sufficient matter for repentance. Let this repentance be our work. Let not the Lord have reason to complain any longer of our forgetfulness of Him. Henceforth upon every new instance of His mercy we will "return" to our knees, to His house, and to His table "to give Him thanks."

We should remember besides, that if we have been cleansed from sin, but neglect thanksgiving, *God's grace will inevitably be sooner or later withdrawn.* We shall relapse into sin, and this time, perhaps, into despair and ruin irretrievable.

Giving thanks to God is a most dignified and delightful work. It is a proper return for His favors. He loves to receive our thanks, and never does the Church on earth so closely resemble the Church above as when God's cleansed and forgiven children make the walls of His house resound with songs of praise. We can conceive of no work nobler or more blessed for men or angels than praising God.

To the general ingratitude of these cleansed lepers there was one happy exception. "One of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks; and he was a Samaritan." Though an alien in blood, he was an Israelite at heart. By manifesting the grace of gratitude, "this stranger," this Gentile, unwittingly predicted the Catholicity of the Church, which was now to include men of every race and of all lands.

No sooner did he see that he was healed—the benefit which he had been so anxiously awaiting and watching for—than he turned back. His joy instantly became gratitude; eagerness to have his cure attested by the priest gave way before the more impetuous eagerness to thank his Benefactor. His voice had been loud when crying for pity; it was now as

loud in thanksgiving. His gratitude was humble and pious ; “he fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks.”

Jesus said unto him, “Arise, go thy way : *thy faith hath saved thee.*” What, then, had saved the rest ? They also had shewn faith, but faith not equal to his. *In his mind the prominent object was Jesus*, which was shewn by his returning to Him instantly on his cure ; the others thought only of their recovery, and so did not return. Therefore the Samaritan had the greater faith. And as his faith was greater, he received a richer blessing. Their bodies were healed, he obtained also soundness of soul.

Brethren, we have been assured of redemption by our Lord Jesus Christ. *Our first duty is thanksgiving.* Let us think of the fearful consummation of spiritual leprosy, even eternal death, and make our praise lively and eager in proportion. We will glorify God with loud voice. We will fall down and give thanks to the Saviour. This will prove our faith, our confidence in Him *who has commanded us to shew ourselves as cleansed.* Our faith will please Him, and His approbation is blessedness indeed. To hear His voice echoing already in our hearts, “Thy faith hath saved thee,” is an earnest of the triumphant moment when He shall say, “Well done ! good and faithful servant.” May that perfect joy be ours !



The Preacher's Finger-Post.

SHILOAH AND THE EUPHRATES, OR MERCY AND JUDGMENT.

"Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly, and rejoice in Resin and Remaliah's son; now, therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks: and he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel."
—Isa. viii. 6—8.

"THIS people" who refused "the waters of Shiloah," &c., includes, we think, the kingdom of Judah. One of the leading characteristic sins of that nation was the want of confidence in Jehovah as their defender, and their trust in foreign alliances for help in trial. The text is a poetic description of this improper conduct, and its dire results. "The waters of Shiloah that go softly," represent the mild and gentle reign of God; "the waters of the river, strong and many," represent the ruthless and tumultuous governments of heathen despots. The history of the Jewish nation mirrors the life of the individual man.

So numerous and complicated are the motives that influence us, and so varied and shifting are the phases of our life, that in no one man can we see a complete picture of ourselves. It takes a whole nation to mirror the character of one man.

Turning these words to our own use, we deduce the following truths:—

I. THAT THE MERCIES OF OUR PRESENT LIFE FLOW "SOFTLY" BY AS A GENTLE STREAM. As "the waters of Shiloah that go softly" by. The stream of mercy rolls deeply and silently at our feet. Two American missionaries thus described these waters of Shiloah:—"Near the south-east corner of the city, at the foot of Zion and Moriah, is the pool of Siloah, whose waters flow with the gentlest murmur from under the holy mountain of Zion, or rather from under Ophel, having Zion on the west and Ophel on the north. The fountain issues from a rock twenty or thirty feet below the surface of the ground. Here it flows without a single murmur, and appears clear as crystal. From this place it winds its way several rods under the

mountain, then makes its appearance with gentle gurgling, and forming a beautiful rill, takes its way down into the valley towards the south-east. We drank of the water and found it soft, of a sweetish taste, and pleasant." Apt emblem of our mercies are these waters. First: They flow *vivifyingly*. These waters of Shiloah were the life of Jerusalem. The stream of mercy here is our life. We live in it, and by it; without it we should cease to be. Secondly: They flow *constantly*. The streams of Shiloah are flowing now. The stream of mercy is *constantly* rolling by us; from the breath of infancy to our mortal gasp it forsakes us not. Thirdly: They flow *softly*. So deep and constant is mercy's stream that it rolls by us almost unheard. Retire into the deepest depths of solitude and silence; let no sound be heard, and the stillness of death reign in the air, yet mercy flows in the warm current of life that courses through the veins, and in that quiet tide of existence that makes us unconscious of ourselves.

II. THAT THE ABUSE OF THIS STREAM OF MERCIES IS AN IMMENSE CRIME. The text teaches that the crime of the Jew in relation to his privi-

leges was twofold—rejection and presumption. First: *Rejection*. "They refused the waters of Shiloah," which means, they refused to avail themselves of those means of national improvement and defence which the mild and munificent reign of Jehovah under which they lived afforded. They refused to trust Him in their dangers. Mercies may be said to be rejected when they are not rightly appropriated. The great design of all mercy with us is to lead us to "repentance," to stimulate us by gratitude to present ourselves in body, soul, and spirit a living sacrifice before God. When this is not the case, we refuse those waters of Shiloah. Secondly: *Presumption*. These people "rejoiced in Rezin and Remaliah's son." The one was the king of Syria; the other, king of Samaria. Their minds ever occupied by the failures and successes of wicked men, their hope of safety rested on the confidence they had in mere worldly alliances; they trusted in an arm of flesh. We abuse God's mercy when we allow it not to inspire us with unshaken confidence in His protecting love and power. There is no greater crime than the abuse of mercy. Sins against mercy are the greatest sins.

III. THAT THIS CRIME WILL BRING ON THE TUMULTUOUS RIVER OF RETRIBUTION. "Behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks," &c. The river here literally means the river Euphrates, a rolling stream not like that of Shiloh, clear, gentle, and silent, but turbid, violent, and tumultuous. It is here used as an emblem of the Assyrian army who had come up against them like the wild surging of a river that would overflow its banks, and engulf them in ruin, and sweep all away. First: *The abuse of mercy leads to retributive misery.* It is so in the case of the Jewish nation. What miseries the abuse of their privileges from age to age brought upon them, until their utter ruin at the destruction of Jerusalem! Secondly: *The streams of retributive misery stand in awful contrast with those of mercy.* Compare the calm, translucent, refreshing waters of Shiloh, with the tumultuous roar and rush of the Euphrates when its banks are overflowed. Infinitely greater, however, is the contrast between the condition of a sinner here, with mercy roll-

ing at his feet; and yonder, with the black and boisterous river dashing in uncontrollable fury its surges over his accursed spirit.

LIFE: A JOURNEY.

"And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness."—Deut. viii. 2.

I. LIFE IS A JOURNEY. "All the way." First: The journey is *intricate*. There are perplexities and difficulties in every stage and every turn. Secondly: The journey is *eventful*. There are changes in every step. All is shifting. Thirdly: The journey is *unretraceable*. There is no retracing step in this journey; but on we go, resistlessly and for ever on, pausing not a moment. Fourthly: The journey is *perilous*. Poisonous streams, and noxious herbs, and venomous serpents lie thickly about it. Fifthly: The journey is *solemn*. It leads the body to the grave, and the spirit either to heaven or hell.

II. LIFE'S JOURNEY HAS A GUIDE. "The Lord thy God led thee." First: *The guide thoroughly understands the way.* Secondly: *The guide has resources equal to all possible emergencies on the way.*

III. LIFE'S JOURNEY CAN NEVER BE FORGOTTEN. "Thou shalt remember all the way." First: Some memory of it is a matter of *necessity*. Memory is such a tenacious faculty that it holds every impression that has ever been made upon the soul, and impressions come thickly on us from the cradle to the grave. Memory will re-walk this path over and over through the ages of the future. "Thou shalt remember," as a matter of constitutional necessity. Secondly: A *right* memory of it is a matter of *obligation*. You should remember it so as to awaken contrition for past sins, gratitude for past mercies, and resolutions for improved conduct.

THE CHURCH THE BODY OF CHRIST.

"For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."
—Rom. xii. 4—5.

Of all the elements of depravity, there are few more wide in their influence and baneful in their issues than that of pride. Heaven resists it, and it is the precursor of ruin. "Pride goeth before destruction," &c. The context is Paul's argument against it. "For I say,

through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think." He does not say that we are not to *think* of ourselves. Self deserves and demands thought. There are two thoughts suggested in the text that bear against pride.

I. THAT EACH CHRISTIAN FORMS AN EQUALLY ESSENTIAL PART IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST. "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office." The man of feeblest talent, if he is a genuine disciple of Christ, is as essentially connected with the Church as he who is the possessor of the most brilliant endowments. Just as the smallest and weakest members of the body are as essentially connected with the organic system as the largest and strongest. This being the case, what ground is there for anyone to pride himself in his distinctions?

II. THAT EACH CHRISTIAN HAS AN EQUALLY VITAL CONNECTION WITH JESUS CHRIST. "So we being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." The body of which all are parts, is the body of Christ. The smallest member of the

body is as *vitally* connected with the soul that inhabits it as the largest. The aggregate is the body of Christ. First: The body is the *sanctuary* of the soul. The Church is the dwelling-place of Christ. Secondly: The body is the servant of the soul. It is the vehicle which conveys into it all which it seeks to obtain, and out of it all it seeks to express. It is the absolute *servant* of the spirit. So is the Church the servant of Christ. Thirdly: The body is the *symbol* of the soul. The body is the revealer of the spirit. All we know of the soul is through the body. The Church is the revealer of Christ. What a blessed thing to be a member, however insignificant, of this body. The soul feels as truly the wound inflicted upon the smallest member of the body as upon the largest. In truth, philosophy teaches that all sensation is in the mind; that a wound inflicted on any part of the body, is not felt in that part, but conveyed by the nerves into the soul. In like manner the great sensorial and ruling Spirit of the Church feels for every member.

DIVINE CARE.

"He careth for you."—1 Pet. v. 7.

HE careth for *all*. "He careth" for the *inorganic*

creation. His care embraceth the smallest atom and the mightiest globe. All the heavenly bodies. "He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down;" He bringeth out the hosts of stars, and calleth them all by their names?

"Who would not think them hung in golden chains?
And so they are; in the high will of Heaven,
Which fixes all, makes adamant of air
Or air of adamant, makes all of nought
Or nought of all, if such the dread decree."

All the changes in the atmosphere are with Him. "He covereth the heaven with clouds, and prepareth rain for the earth." He watereth the hills from His chambers. "When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens, and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightning with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures." Jer. x. 13. The sea is under His care. "Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them." Ps. lxxxix. 9. He careth for *vegetable* existence. "He causeth grass to grow for the cattle, and herbs for the service of man. He sendeth forth his spirit, and reneweth the face of the earth." He careth for *irrational* creatures. "He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens

which cry." He feedeth the fowls of the air. "These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season." Ps. civ. Most assuredly, then, "He careth" for *man*, His intelligent offspring. He careth for *you*; the *race*, the *nation*, the *family*, the *individual*; and especially for *you*, the individual, who, through His Son, art endowed with the spirit of a child, and restored to His fellowship and service.

We make two remarks about this fact.

I. IT IS A DEMONSTRABLE FACT. First: *Antecedent reasoning bears testimony to this fact.* He is our *Creator*. Does the artist, who has exerted his genius to the utmost in the production of that which he considers his masterpiece, watch over it with care? That which he produced, is he not anxious to preserve? Is it not natural to infer, therefore, that the Great Producer of all things takes a careful interest in the works of His hand? He is our *Proprietor*. With what care do men watch over their own property; how anxious they are to guard it. Is the Eternal indifferent to what becomes of His property? He is our *Father*. With what anxious interest does an earthly father superintend

the movements of his child. Is the Infinite Father, the fountain of all love, careless of His offspring? He is our *Redeemer*. Will He who "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all," cease to watch over us every moment with the utmost care? The very relations which he sustains to us urge the conclusion. Secondly: *The condition in which we were born into this life.* We come into this world the most helpless of all helpless creatures, without a glimmer of reason, without the use of our senses or limbs. What parental love is prepared to welcome us, to guard our weakness and supply our needs! We come into a world with certain desires to be gratified, certain wants to be supplied, certain faculties to be developed. We find the world exquisitely fitted to our organization in every point. The fitness of the world to us shows that He careth for us. Thirdly: *The unequivocal teaching of the Bible.* "Can a woman forget her sucking child," &c. "Behold the fowls of the air," &c. "God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel," &c. "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, before," &c. "Even to your old age I am

he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you; I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you." "All things work together for good," &c. Fourthly: *The consciousness of the Christian.* Every Christian *feels* that God careth for him. This is the strongest proof, a proof that no hostile reasoning can overcome or shake.

II. IT IS A GLORIOUS FACT. First: *It encourages the most unbounded trustfulness.* "He careth for you." Who is *He*? One who is infinite in wisdom, goodness, and power. Why be anxious about your future *lot in life*? "He careth for you." "Your bread shall be given you, and your water shall be sure." Why be anxious about *death*? Though it is an event associated with much to terrify and depress, yet "He careth for you." "Though you walk through the valley of the shadow of death," &c. Why be anxious about the *judgment*? Though it is an event of awful solemnity, "He careth for you." He will be your friend on that day. Have unbounded trust, and go on the path of life with a firm step and a buoyant soul. "If God be for us, who can

be against us?" Secondly: *It encourages adoring gratitude.* What condescension is here! "Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth?" What a thought, that He, whose the great universe is, and to whom it is as nothing, should deign to care for *you*! What forbearing mercy is here! He careth for you—*you* who have transgressed His laws.

Blessed be Heaven for such a text as this. It teaches us that our life is not chance. We are not here as the results of fortuitous circumstances, we are here as the production, the offspring of Him who careth for us. It teaches us that our life is not an orphanage. We are not left here unguarded and uncared for; our Father is here amongst us.

"'He careth for you,' and whate'er betide,
He is your Saviour, your Friend, and your Guide;
The rolling worlds He guides by His decree
But most of all He careth, friend, for thee.
Then cast away thy grief, and crush each fear,
From every mourner's eye He'll wipe the tear.
And give the needy help in His own way:
Be bright and happy, then, through life's short day."

The Pulpit and its Handmaids.

THE INFIDELITY OF ENGLAND.

The form which the infidelity of England, especially, has taken, is one hitherto unheard of in human history. No nation ever before declared boldly, by print and word of mouth, that its religion was good for show, but "would not work." Over and over again it has happened that nations have denied their gods, but they denied them bravely. The Greeks in their decline jested at their religion, and frittered it away in flatteries and fine arts. The French refused their's fiercely, tore down their altars, and brake their carven images. The question about God with both these nations was still, even in their decline, fairly put, though falsely answered. "Either there is or is not a Supreme Ruler; we consider of it, declare there is not, and proceed accordingly." But we English have put the matter in an entirely new light. "There is a Supreme Ruler, no question of it, only He cannot rule. His works won't work. He will be quite satisfied with euphonious and respectful repetition of them. Execution would be too dangerous under existing circumstances, which He certainly never contemplated." I had no conception of the absolute darkness which has covered the national mind in this respect, until I began to come into collision with persons engaged in the study of the economical and political questions. The entire naïveté and undisturbed imbecility with which I found them declare that the laws of the devil were the only practicable ones, and that the laws of God were merely a form of poetical

language, past all that I had ever before heard or read of mortal infidelity. I knew the fool had often said in his heart there was no God; but to hear him say clearly out with his lips, "There is a foolish God," was something which my art studies had not prepared me for. The French had indeed, for a considerable time, hinted much of the meaning in the delicate and compassionate blasphemy of their phrase "*le bon Dieu*," but had never ventured to put it into more precise terms. Now this form of unbelief in God is connected with, and necessarily productive of, a precisely equal unbelief in man. Co-relative with the assertion, "There is a foolish God," is the assertion, "There is a brutish man." "As no laws but those of the devil are practicable in the world, so no impulses but those of the brute," says a modern economist, "are appealable to in the world. Faith, generosity, honesty, zeal, and self-sacrifice are poetical phrases. None of these things can, in reality, be counted upon; there is no truth in man which can be used as a moving or productive power. All motive force in him is essentially brutish, covetous, or contentious. His power is only power of prey. Otherwise than the spider, he cannot design; otherwise than the tiger, he cannot feed." This is the modern interpretation of that embarrassing article of the Creed, "the communion of saints." It has always seemed very strange to me—not, indeed, that this Creed should have been adopted, it being the entirely necessary consequence of the previous fundamental article, but that no one should ever

seem to have any misgivings about it; that, practically, no one had *seen* how strong work was done by man; how either for hire, or for hatred, it never had been done; and that no amount of pay had ever made a good soldier, a good artist, or a good workman. You pay your soldiers and sailors so many pence a day, at which rated sum one will do good fighting for you, another bad fighting. Pay as you will, the entire goodness of the fighting depends always on its being done for nothing, or, rather, less than nothing, in the expectation of no pay but death. Examine the work of your spiritual teachers, and you will find the statistical law respecting them is, "The less pay, the better work." Examine, also, your writers and artists; for ten pounds you shall have a *Paradise Lost*, and for a plate of figs a Dürer drawing, but for a million of money sterling, neither. Examine your men of science; paid by starvation, Kepler will discover the laws of the orbs of heaven for you; and driven out to die in the street, Swammerdam shall discover the laws of life for you; such hard terms do they make with you, these brutish men, who can only be had for hire. Neither is good work ever done for hatred any more than hire, but for love only. For love of their country, or their leader, or their

duty, men fight steadily; but for massacre and plunder, feebly. Your signal, "England expects every man to do his duty," they will answer; your signal of black flag and death's head, they will not answer. And, verily, they will answer it no more in commerce than in battle. The cross-bones will not make a good shop-sign, you will find ultimately, any more than a good battle-standard. Not the cross-bones but the cross. Now the practical result of this infidelity in man, is the utter ignorance of the ways of getting his right work out of him. From a given quantity of human power and intellect, to produce the least possible result, is a problem solved, nearly with mathematical precision, by the present methods of the nation's economical procedure. The power and intellect are enormous. With the best soldiers at present existing, we survive in battle, and but survive; because, by help of providence, a man whom we have kept all his life in command of a company, forces his way at the age of seventy so far up as to obtain permission to save us, and die unthanked. With the shrewdest thinkers in the world, we have not yet succeeded in arriving at any national conviction respecting the uses of life.

—RUSKIN.

Theological Notes and Queries.

OPEN COUNCIL.

[The utmost freedom of honest thought is permitted in this department. The reader must therefore use his own discriminating faculties, and the Editor must be allowed to claim freedom from responsibility.]

BELIEVING AND FAITH.

REPLICANT. In answer to QUERIST No. 1, p. 116. The word *πίστις*

which is constantly rendered *faith* in the English Testament, is *once* and but *once* translated *belief*, 2 Thess. ii. 13. The kindred verb

and participle could not, however, be represented by any English words kindred to the substantive, since we have no verb *to faith*. Could our translators have coined some such word, it would have been highly advantageous, but instead of doing so they had recourse to the verb *to believe*. That they did so, proves, however, that in their opinion, *faith* and *belief* were most closely connected, if not identical. To *believe* in a person is the same as trusting him, as having affiance in him; and if you trust him you *believe* him, that is, you believe what he says to be true. The word *faith* rather refers to the cause, that is, the sentiment which submits to authority; the word *belief* to the effect of that submission, that is, the hearty reception of the Divine word.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE WICKED.

REPLICANT. In answer to QUERIST No. 2, p. 116. Daniel says, xii. 2, "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." From which it is evident that the wicked shall arise as well as the righteous. John v. 29, also speaks of a "resurrection of life for those who have done good, and a resurrection of damnation *κρίσεως* for those who have done evil." As no one dies who is not either just or unjust, so all who die will partake of the one or the other resurrection. "All that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth." 1 Cor. xv. 22, "For as in Adam *all* die, even so in Christ shall *all* be made alive." Ver. 21, "By man came death, by man cometh also the resurrection of the dead," where resurrection is evidently co-extensive with death. Christ shall "destroy death," 2 Tim. i. 10, *καταργήσαντος τὸν θάνατον*, but if one were left

dead, death would not be destroyed. "Neither Paul, in 1 Cor. xv., nor any other passage of the New Testament, determines anything on the question, whether the bodies of the damned will suffer a like transformation" to that mentioned in ver. 51. — *Bretschneider, Dogmatik* ii. 413.

THE SACRAMENTS AND CHURCH-MEMBERSHIP.

REPLICANT. In answer to QUERIST No. 3, p. 116. According to the Scriptures, baptism is rather the *entrance* itself to Church-membership than the *condition*. Acts x. 47: Peter received the Gentiles to the Church by baptism, since they were partakers of the Holy Ghost. Christ commissioned the apostles to "make disciples of all nations by baptizing them," *μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, βαπτίζοντες* κ. τ. λ. So the Epistles, which are address to various Churches, supposes the members of them to have been baptized. Rom. vi. 3, compared with i. 7; 1 Cor. i. 2, and 13; Eph. i. 1, and iv. 5; Col. i. 2, and ii. 12; Gal. i. 2, and iii. 27; 1 Pet. i. 2, and iii. 21. Partaking of the Lord's supper is regarded as the most characteristic act, the most emphatic profession, the noblest privilege, of a member of the Church. 1 Cor. x. 16, 17.

THE "ANGEL" OF REVELATION.

REPLICANT. In answer to QUERIST No. 4, p. 116. It was one of the seven angels with the vials; chap. xvii. 1; xv. 1. These, from the analogy of Scripture, we should be inclined to regard as belonging to a superhuman order of spirits. It was not a human spirit which destroyed the first-born of Egypt, nor the army of Sennacherib.

THE BLOOD OF CHRIST.

REPLICANT. In answer to QUERIST No. 5, p. 116. The blood of Christ, when spoken of, is conceived of as "shed." Matthew xxvi. 28.

As when blood is shed, life departs, the shedding of Christ's blood refers to His death. But as this historical fact has a stupendous theological significance, the same is referred to by the expression, "the blood of Christ." Now Christ's submission to death was an act of obedience, and that the most decided ever performed. Further, as brought about by Himself, Christ's death is spoken of as a sacrifice for sins, Heb. ix. 26, and as an offering, ver. 14; and as brought about by God, as a vicarious chas-

tisement, Isa. liii. 4—6, 8, 10. There is evidently a mystery here, before which it becometh faith to be silent and gratefully acquiescent. On the whole, we may say that the phrase, "the blood of Christ," has a twofold meaning; on the one hand, it expresses the expiation of our guilt by Christ's death; and on the other, the provocative and constraining power of His death, whereby our hearts and lives are purified, and we are led to grateful imitation and entire consecration. Heb. ix. 14.

Literary Notices.

[We hold it to be the duty of an Editor either to give an early notice of the books sent to him for remark, or to return them at once to the Publisher. It is unjust to praise worthless books; it is robbery to retain unnoticed ones.]

THE REVIEWER'S CANON.

In every work regard the author's end,
Since none can compass more than they intend.

A HEBREW GRAMMAR, WITH EXERCISES. By M. M. KALISCH, Ph. D., M.A. In two Parts. Part I.—The Outlines of the Language, with Exercises, being a Practical Introduction to the Study of Hebrew. Part II.—The Exceptional Forms and Constructions; preceded by an Essay on the History of Hebrew Grammar. Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, and Green.

To succeed in the study of Hebrew requires an iron will. Latin may prove a door to Greek and a key to French; and few Englishmen of wit will find much difficulty with the language, which is cousin German to their mother-tongue. But Hebrew, belonging as it does to the Shemitic family, and differing in every respect of etymology and syntax from the Indo-Germanic languages, is altogether strange to the English eye, ear, and mind. It effects no easy lodgment in the memory, and having been acquired with labor, is often lost with ease.

If, however, you have any taste for philology, you may, when once well embarked on the study of Hebrew, take great delight therein.

Philology is the highest branch of Natural History, conversant as it is with the wondrous border-land of matter and mind, where the delivery of mental conceptions is at once conditioned and limited by the organs of speech, and those organs are stimulated and developed by mental necessities. The simplicity of Hebrew causes it to be disdained by some grammarians. But that very simplicity is its charm, bearing less of the stamp of human art and more of original human nature than the fully developed Sanscrit and Greek. It reflects the childhood of the race. A being who knew not the human organs of speech might almost guess their nature from the Hebrew etymology, so exactly do the changes and the compromises answer to the structure and provide for the ease of lips, teeth, tongue and throat. A language so completely moulded by the mouth is, as might be expected, most pleasing to the ear; having sometimes tones of ravishing softness and sweetness, and at others, of overpowering energy.

Hebrew literature, *as such*, is unrivalled in majesty and beauty, unconventional and strong, rich without redundancy, chaste without severity. Acquaintance with the master-pieces of Greece and Rome sends the student back to Moses, David, and Isaiah, with a more intense relish, a more decided and intelligent conviction of their unapproached superiority.

The *theological* importance of Hebrew is obvious. It is the language of revelation, being not *only* the very speech of the Old Testament, but to a great extent furnishing the idiom of the New, and so underlying the Greek, that ignorance of the dialect of prophets often causes a man to be very much in the dark about the meaning of evangelists and apostles, and exposes him to baseless notions and injurious errors. On the other hand, acquaintance with the usage of Hebrew terms gives the theologian a confidence which can be gained in no other way. Luther declared he would not part with what Hebrew he had for mines of gold. Happy had it been for the Christian cause had divines bestowed more attention on the Hebrew lexicon and concordance, and shown less anxiety about spinning their own complete systems of theology!

Here, however, is another standard Hebrew Grammar, worthy to be placed on the same shelf with Gesenius and Ewald. It will be found useful and adapted equally to the beginner and to the advanced student. It smooths the path of the one, and furnishes the other with such complete and reliable information as will render him an accomplished scholar. The two volumes are constructed with happy care and skill, so as to meet the wants of both classes of students. The first volume, as an introduction, furnishes with clearness only the outlines which are needed by the tyro. He is led on through the successive sections step by step, and each exercise is so carefully adapted to the section to which it is appended, or to those which precede, that the future is not anti-

icipated, nor the learner discouraged by being put to work for which he is unprepared. In this virtue of considerate method, Kalisch's first volume excels even the *Chrestomathy* of Moses Stuart, where the compiler, with all his care, has not always succeeded in avoiding the opposite error. The second volume contains the same number of sections as the first, treating respectively of the same subjects, but much more thoroughly than before; the correspondence of the sections in the two volumes being indicated by the use of the Arabic numeral characters in the one, and the Roman in the other. The first volume, but for one or two easily removable objections presently to be mentioned, would be the best existing guide for the beginner. The second volume, to whose perfection nothing seems wanting, is sufficient for the purpose of those who, having by aid of the first, laid a good foundation, wish to become thoroughly acquainted with the niceties of the text of the Old Testament.

Besides the exercises, the first volume is provided with a progressive series of reading lessons from the Old Testament, and with a twofold vocabulary—Hebrew and English, English and Hebrew. The second volume opens with a valuable sketch of the history of Hebrew Grammar, with characters of the most prominent grammarians from the Masorites down to Ewald. This essay embodies the results of much research and learning, and gives to the student in a small space, what without it he might search folios for in vain. This volume is also furnished with an Index of Anomalous Forms, which, as an appendix to the Lexicon, will prove serviceable to the often perplexed student.

There are certain peculiarities of method in the first volume, which in our judgment might be relinquished with advantage in another edition. Foregoing grammarians, as every student knows, have generally in the verbal paradigms given the persons in the order of third, second, and first; an order which seems well suited to the genius of the Shemitic tongues, as it places the root first. It has, moreover, an agreeable rhythm, which, as in Latin and Greek, helps the learner's memory by his ear. From this time-honored method Dr. Kalisch has thought proper to deviate, and not, as we think, with advantage. Again, instead of the usual example of the regular verb, *Katal*, Dr. K. gives a verb *Lamed Resh*, which at once awakens misgiving in the learner, a misgiving which, however groundless, it were better to avoid. *Katal* was most judiciously taken as the standard by Gesenius, and is preferable to *Kashar*. Finally, the book is disfigured by more than average typographical error, which, in a first Hebrew book, is a serious matter. The paradigm of the regular verb has a flagrant instance of this. The first reading lesson has an erratum in the first line. We earnestly counsel all concerned, that no pains be spared to render other editions immaculate.

Having mentioned these easily remedied drawbacks, we heartily commend this invaluable work to teachers and to private students, whom it

renders as much as possible independent of teachers, and we predict for it a success unprecedented in the history of English Hebrew Grammars. The days of Ashworth and Yeates have long since passed away. Improvement has succeeded improvement, and now with Kalisch's Grammar, and Davidson's Lexicon, we see no reason why the ability to read the original Old Testament should not become all but universal with the clergy, and very general with others. There is no royal road to Hebrew, but Dr. Kalisch has constructed a railway on which passengers of every class may travel with comfort, and with as great speed as is consistent with safety, to the terminus hitherto reached slowly and painfully, and by but few.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES EXPLAINED. Vol. I. By JOSEPH A. ALEXANDER, D.D. London: James Nisbet & Co.

DR. ALEXANDER informs us in his preface that the "materials of this work were collected in a course of academical instruction, and prepared for publication, in the first instance, with a view to the peculiar wants of ministers and students; but after the first chapter was in type, the writer was induced to re-commence the work upon a new plan, in the hope of making it more generally useful, by the reduction of its size and the omission of all matter supposed to be interesting only to professional or educated readers." One of the main objects of the work is to perfect the translation, so as to place the English reader as nearly as possible on the same footing as the student of the Greek text. To explain the sense of the history, rather than develop the doctrines it invokes and the lessons it teaches, is the service which these volumes undertake. Few men living are better qualified to undertake the work of a Bible-exponent than Dr. Alexander. His clear and vigorous intellect, his thorough scholarship and extensive reading, are evinced in every page. The work has no superfluous observations, no parade of learning, no ingenious spiritualizings, no waste words; all is *Ad Rem*. The point is touched at once, and touched with light.

LECTURES ON SOME OF THE OFFICES AND THE FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.
By Rev. J. W. REEVE, M.A. London: James Nisbet & Co.

HE who would look into these discourses in order to discover the coruscations of genius, the profound in thought, or the broad in theology, will, perhaps, be disappointed; albeit, he will find a large amount of evangelical sentiment clearly and earnestly set forth.

THE PULPIT ASSISTANT. Vol. I. By Rev. THOMAS HANNAM. London: William Tegg.

THIS is a work well-known and extensively used by the preceding generation of ministers. While there are some good sketches of sermons here, there are not a few poor in conception, illogical in structure, feeble and common-place in development.



A HOMILY

ON

The Weakness of Scepticism.

(Continued from page 129.)

THE other proposition is :—

I. THAT THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY CAN NEVER BE REALLY DENIED. This will appear, when we consider that the principles of the Christian religion do not conflict, but accord with principles recognized by mankind. All objections to the elements of Christianity will lie with equal force against the principles which all men every day avow, and every day act upon. Let us notice some of the most leading and essential articles of the Christian faith, and see how objections against them tell with equal weight against principles universally received.

First : There is the doctrine of *Future Life*. It is objected that there can be no evidence to support this doctrine in the very nature of the case. Now our immediate inquiry is, whether objection to a future life is practically entertained by any man. If it be found truly to exist, as the sentiment of any man, our undertaking requires that we allow it to stand as a valid objection, for we have endorsed the true and real sentiments of all men, but not the inconsistencies or misrepresentations of any. And to show that no such objection really exists, it is only necessary to state with brevity two simple facts. (1) *Present life is, by all men, acknowledged*

to be a fact; and (2) *No man practically avows the doctrine of annihilation.* Then, whatever *changes* this presently existing thing we call *life* may be subject or destined to, it can never cease to exist in some form or other, according to the uniform sentiment of all men. This short argument we think is conclusive. The man who denies the doctrine of future life, must necessarily either deny the *present life*, or avow the doctrine of *annihilation*; for if he exists now, he can only cease to exist by *annihilation*. Was the *former* ever *denied*, or the *latter* *avowed*? Never! for annihilation cannot be *conceived of* with human faculties.

It is said in effect, in a variety of forms of argument or expression, that the *changes* through which man is said to pass in his transit from this world to another, are practically equivalent to a cessation of one life, and the commencement of the other. Well, is this sentiment feigned or real? What does any man know or acknowledge touching this point! Look at the *gray-headed venerable* man of wisdom and experience. What stores of philosophic, theoretical, and experimental knowledge his vast mind comprehends. Now, trace him back by *years* and *days* to his embryo state of existence, and tell me if he has not passed through changes, and estimate the greatness of those changes. Suppose we had the means of communicating with a person at the earliest stage of his known existence. We would explain to him many things quite familiar to us now. We would tell him of *associations* with other beings like himself, of *walking* from place to place, of *affections*, *plans*, *resolutions*, and things which enter into the practical details of life in that stage which we now occupy. These things are *incomprehensible* to him. It cannot be that he himself is to experience all these things; and yet all this is familiar to all men. The simple truth is, that no change that awaits us at the period of death, in the grave, amidst the scenes of the resurrection and judgment, in the dark doom of the one world or the higher glories of the other, are anywhere in the Scripture represented as being *greater*, more radical, thorough, or

overwhelming than those we have already passed through, from the earliest period of existence to the present position we occupy. So no man objects ; no man can object to the interest and participation we are supposed to have in the things of another world, because of the greatness of the *changes* through which we are to pass in our transit to the grave. This would be to deny that which is notoriously known, and to object to that which is notoriously assented to by all men. The objection, therefore, does not exist.

Second : There is the doctrine of *Retribution*. Will our conduct in this life affect our happiness in the next ? It is said there is *no warrant* that it will. Well, what testimony do the opposers of Christianity furnish on this point ? What are the uniform sentiments of all men ? for we are stopped from bringing testimony from the Bible or the ranks of Christianity. What are the *opinions* of infidels ? No proposition in morals is, or can be, more universally acknowledged than this—that our conduct to-day affects our condition to-morrow ; that our condition and state of happiness in the latter periods of life are mainly the results of our conduct all through the past days of our lives. No man denies that the general law is, that the wicked are usually, in some way and to some extent, made to suffer the results of wrong doing ; and that in some way and to some extent, the virtuous are rewarded in general society, and enjoy the legitimate results of right conduct. This is the regular course of things on this side the grave. Now the notion that all these laws will cease to operate the moment we approach the grave, requires the production either of *some* proof, or the setting forth of some principles that purport to confront the simple analogy of the case. Where is the man that will assert that God will be a different being *there* from what he is *here* ? Who will affirm that there is something intrinsic in death which has the effect of cutting us off entirely from the results of our former conduct, changing our personal identity, and of entirely uprooting and turning wrong end foremost all the laws under which we now notoriously live,

respecting the consequences or merit of moral conduct? The supposition that such principles exist, out of a mad-house, is simply absurd.

But we are gravely told here, that all these things may be true; but in matters of such grave import we must have *Demonstration*. We cannot, we ought not, to be required to act upon matters of such high interest without an absolute guarantee of the truths of the Christian religion. Well, we go into the world and inquire if such are in truth the principles of any man. It will be borne in mind that we are not explaining or defending these several doctrines. We are only looking at objections which are supposed to be urged against them. It would, therefore, be an unnecessary digression for us to undertake to explain how far the theory of Christianity is or is not demonstrated. We inquire whether any man does practically object to it because of its supposed lack of *demonstration*. And you can inquire of the first man you meet. The *farmer* toils long and hard through the weary season without any *guarantee* of harvest in the autumn. He acts only upon probability. The *merchantman* launches out upon the dangerous deep, without any guarantee of success. He embarks his fortune, his health, and even his life, upon only supposed or probable advantages, on the other side of the water. The *tradesman* does not *know* that he will be able to sell his wares at a profit. The traveller has no *guarantee* that he will reach the end of his journey. The same principle is also vindicated and exemplified by the physician at the bed-side of the sick, where the life of man is at stake, and by the warrior at the head of his hosts, where the honor and existence of his nation are at stake, and the lives of thousands in jeopardy. Who stands still in the affairs of life, and from principle, does not act until success in the use of means is guaranteed unto him? If no such man can be found, then Christianity has no opponent, so far as this question is concerned.

Third: There is the doctrine of *Supernaturalness*. The Bible propounds the principle that it is a supernatural

production, and its history is a history of *miracles*. But the miracles are objected to. It is said of them that they cannot be true, because all *presumption* and *experience* testify against such occurrences. This objection has made some stir in the world. An author no less reputed than Mr. Hume, wrote a book to convince the world chiefly on this point. He says : "a miracle is a violation of the laws of nature, and as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle, from the very nature of the fact, is as entire as an argument from experience can possibly be imagined." A firm and unalterable experience then, has established the laws of nature, and therefore a departure from them cannot be supposed or presumed ; or, in other words, experience or testimony cannot set aside that which experience has already *established*. And hence miracles cannot be "*imagined*" to be true. Mr. Hume's logic goes to say that no fact is to be received that is contrary to our experience. The argument stands thus. Miracles are contrary to our experience. Well, let us try this assumption of Mr. Hume's. Whatever is contrary to our experience must not be believed. The discovery of America is contrary to our experience ; therefore it must not be believed ; so with Napoleon's imprisonment. So with the Battle of Waterloo, and a *thousand* things. And yet though this reasoning is palpably absurd, how many a logical fop has boasted that it was the argument which would exterminate Christianity. These facts are all violations of our experience. Are they all to be rejected ? Are no facts true but those which experience has established ? But there is no man more opposed to this bald fallacy of Mr. Hume than Mr. Hume himself. For in the second part of the same section, he says :—"I beg the limitations here may be remarked, when I say that a miracle can never be proved so as to be the foundation of a system of religion. For I own that otherwise, there may possibly be miracles, or violations of the usual course of nature, of *such a kind as to admit of proof from human testimony*." Upon this, the celebrated jurist, Mr. Starkie, makes

the following remark, which demonstrates that this objection of Mr. Hume is not, and cannot be really entertained by any man:—"In what *way* the *use* to be *made of a fact*, when *proved*, can affect the validity of the proof, or how it can be that a fact *proved to be true* is not true for *all purposes* to which it is *relevant*, I pretend not to understand." Thus it is seen that Mr. Hume himself, the first to put forth this objection to Christianity, is the very first to expose its fallacy, and to show that it does not, cannot exist! Miracles may be "*proved*" to be true, says our author, but "*cannot be true for religious purposes*"! This is *worse than trifling*. *It is logically disgraceful*. Moreover, every Christian who feels the power of religion knows it to be a miracle in his case, &c. But where is the man who will not receive any fact upon sufficient testimony? Any alleged fact can be *rationaly* rejected on one ground and one only, viz., the lack of sufficient testimony to prove it. But the idea that any alleged fact that does not in itself imply a contradiction, is abstractedly of itself incapable of receiving testimony, or of being proved, is ridiculous and absurd!

Fourth: There is the doctrine of *Mediatorship*. This doctrine is said to be a new thing in the world—a strange peculiarity of Christianity, which taxes the credulity of man beyond its ordinary tension. Does man practically deny mediatorship? It is a common doctrine of the world. It is not a new thing standing alone in Christianity. Let us ask a few questions: Does it ever happen that one person, in the ordinary course of providence, becomes placed in a position to ward off dangers and misfortunes, which are hastening upon individuals, communities, or countries? Does God come forth *directly*, as a general rule, with blessings, or do we not receive his gifts through the media of appointed guardians? How does God usually bless and protect infancy? Does he not appoint a guardian over the cradle? What is a mother's care or a teacher's instruction but mediation? Verily you may ask a thousand questions, and the answer to each will prove that every man believes the doctrine.

To urge that the Christian's Mediator is not a true and valuable Mediator, is shifting the question entirely.

Fifth : There is the doctrine of *Regeneration*. It is often urged against Christianity, that it enjoins and requires an entire *change of heart and life*. It must again be borne in mind that we are not called upon now to explain or defend the doctrine of change, or what theologians call regeneration. We are only to look at the objection itself, and inquire whether the doctrine is a peculiarity of Christianity, or whether it is not, on the contrary, a common principle, affirmed, recognized, assented to, and acted upon by all men. In other words, does the objection really exist, or is it fraudulently put forth. To get an answer, we must, of course, go out into the world and inquire. And here we do not find that men always remain the same. The very idea of becoming a Christian—that which you do not now profess to be—implies a change. So does the entering upon a new pursuit in life imply a change. A man is a seaman, statesman, soldier, who was once a *schoolboy*. A man may be now a tradesman, now a surveyor, now a clergyman, and then a farmer. And surely the *heart and life* change with all these changes. Man *marries*, becomes a parent, and what a revolution takes place in his sympathies, aims, manners, and pursuits ! Here the principle of change *applies* to every department of life. And so we find moral changes just as complete and frequent. Does it never happen that an undutiful, incorrigible son becomes kind, dutiful, and obliging to his parents ? Did the drunkard never reform ? Was the possibility of moral reformation ever conceded outside the purlieu of Christianity ? Did gratitude never inspire the breast, move the feelings, change the heart of a man towards a benefactor ? Did man never review his conduct, repent and change his life, repair the injury he had inflicted upon others ? And if you say *yes*, then I ask, were these changes confined to the *head*, the *hands*, the *eyes*, the *intellect* ? Or does the heart, yea, the inmost feelings of the soul, move correspondingly, and constitute the very essence of these doings ?

Sixth: There is the doctrine of *Mysteriousness*. A much-talked-of objection to Christianity is said to lie against its *incomprehensibility*. There are mysterious things, says the objector, which I cannot comprehend. The *cause* of the result is not always seen and understood; and how, then—why, then—can I be called upon to receive and submit to that which I cannot understand. The requirements of religion are unreasonable, unless the scheme be graduated to my understanding. This objection, certainly, presents some formidable appearances; but still, when I promise to adopt and act upon it to the extent any other man will, it seems to me I am promising very little. Let us see if any man *does*, if any man *can*, entertain this objection. The *agriculturist* does not understand the *cause* of vegetable growth, and yet he essays to promote it. The *mechanic* and the man of science invariably, and without hesitation, act upon the principles of attraction, repulsion, and inertia, and yet no man knows *what*, or *why*, or *how* they operate. A *hungry* man seldom fails to eat because he cannot comprehend his system, and yet no man ever pretended to know *why* food was necessary to health and comfort. A *mariner* sets out to cross the ocean. The lives of all on board depend upon a principle that is called magnetism. In the hinder part of the ship we see a small spindle or needle which is charged, or supposed to be charged, with we know not what. It is suspended in the middle on a pivot, and never fails to point to the North. Can any man understand why it does not sometimes point W. or E. or S. Men rely implicitly upon information received, as they say, by telegraph, and yet no man understands *what* electricity really is, or how it passes along the wire; or, indeed, whether anything passes along the wire at all. The man who objects to mystery, must object even to his own existence.

Seventh: There is the doctrine of *Prayer*. If God be unchangeable, how can there be answers to prayer? This objection is obviously self-destructive in itself, intrinsically. The objection, to mean anything, is against the possibility of

a change of relation between God and man. This relation cannot be altered, it is said, because God is unchangeable. This is not a logical rejoinder, because it might be that the change was on the part of *man*. To assert that the *relation* cannot be changed, is the same as to assert that neither of the parties can change, not that *one* of the parties is unchangeable; for it might turn out, that God in His unchangeableness is willing to confer blessings and favors upon repentant and prayerful persons, when He will not act in the same manner towards unrepentant and unprayerful ones. Let it be asserted that man's nature is such that he cannot change from a state of non-repentance and non-prayerfulness, and then, and not till then, may God's unchangeableness be pleaded in bar to the doctrine of prayer and repentance. But we might proceed to show, as in former cases, that the doctrine in hand of repentance and prayer is a doctrine universally *received* and generally *acted upon* in the affairs of life. Men pray to God, *not to procure a change in His law*, but for the *administration of it*, and for its application in their case. And do not men pursue this course towards a *legislature*, a *judge* of a court, a *king*, a *benefactor*, or a *parent*? These persons or tribunals who thus dispense alms or favors, do not repeal their laws or change their administration every time they grant the prayer of a petitioner. All men assent to this, and, *therefore*, the objection we are considering is *impossible*. Whether Christians *do* or *do not* derive any advantage from prayer, as a matter of fact, is a very different question from an inquiry into the principle of prayer. To determine this question you must go and ask practical Christians themselves. They, *only*, are competent witnesses, and by them must it be determined, for they only have been in circumstances to know.

Eighth: There is the doctrine of *The Trinity*. It is said to be *absurd*; for how can three be one? And it is often supposed that Christians are put to considerable trials of skill and logic to maintain this doctrine against the objections of sceptics and infidels. This is all wrong. So

far as this objection is concerned, like the previous ones we have looked at, it is not necessary to maintain, or attempt to maintain it at all. The proper way is to make the objector himself maintain the doctrine ; or in other words, prove to him that he does *fully, always, unhesitatingly* maintain the doctrine, in everything he thinks, says, or does on the subject. What is the objection against ? It is against the doctrine of *plurality of personality*. Does any man object to this doctrine ? No man does—no man can. It is perhaps impossible to state any principle or belief more common than this doctrine. Every man sees it, assents to it, every time he looks upon himself or his fellow. He sees in himself a mere physical or animal existence. In this he rises not above the beasts of the field or the fowls of the air. Indeed, in many respects, he falls far below them. But besides his flesh, he can think, reason, calculate, conclude, hope. His flesh can no more do this than the flesh of an ox or the wood of a tree. Here, then, is a plurality of personality as certain and clear as that we can understand what we mean by the expression. I do not say that there is any analogy to the plurality of personality in the Godhead. That is not now the question. I only show that the objector does really hold the doctrine. To object against a doctrine is to state a reason against it ; and a man cannot state a reason against a doctrine or principle which he openly and notoriously avows and acts upon every day.

Ninth : There is the doctrine of *Faith*. Faith, as a condition of salvation, is very stoutly objected against, as quite an unmeaning appointment in Christianity, both arbitrary and useless. The objector professes to see no sense in it. And yet in the affairs of life very few important advantages are obtained, very little success found, but in the exercise of faith. Let it be taken away from men of the world, in the affairs of life, and where is achievement ! where is success ? Ask the *farmer* what is it that spurs him onward through toil and temporary disappointment, and enables him to work his weary way through the summer's heat, into the harvest

of autumn, but an unwavering faith in the principles of agriculture? Ask the *mariner*, and he will ascribe successful voyages to solid world-faith in the needle, the chart, and the quadrant. Ask the physician, and he will refer to faith in medicine, anatomy, and physiology. Faith is a principle entertained and acted upon by parent, child, tradesman, lawyer, student, teacher. Never was marvel done on earth, but it sprung of faith. Nothing noble, generous, or great, but faith was at the root of the achievement. Leonidas fought in human faith, and Joshua in Divine. Then, where is the objection we are considering? What are its elements? Who entertains it? It is a common principle. And who will dare to expose his *ignorance* by saying that it is the condition of success in temporal matters, but not of salvation!

Tenth: There is the doctrine of *Christian Perfection*. The objection to this is probably the loudest of all objections ever urged against Christianity. It is said to be clear fanaticism, false in fact, and ridiculous in appearance. And yet it is likely that a very slight examination will show that the common creed of all men has not a more clear or prominent feature or section in it than this very doctrine. I make no inquiries into the doctrine of Christian perfection. We shall look solely at the objections to it, and see if they really exist. And here we inquire, is it a *new* and strange doctrine peculiar to Christianity? Ask the orator how high he has fixed his standard of perfection in the powers of oratory, beyond which point he does not aim? His young manhood makes war upon all who have preceded him. His pride disdains the achievements of mortals; and he would, *if he could*, hold his audience nerveless and breathless—subject only to the flash of his eye and the move of his finger. His motto is *perfection*. Ask the *painter*—If he would not, were he able, make the canvas *whisper*! The *sculptor*, if he could, would chisel the marble, that you could see the very life blood coursing in its veins! To *excel* is the desire and purpose of every man who is not a drone or a sluggard. What means *achievement*. Is it a word without a meaning? “Go on to perfection” is the only

motto worthy a God-created, heaven-aspiring, mind. It is the first thing the child learns, and the last thing the sage grasps after. And would you deny this heavenly doctrine to the Christian? Must he, and he alone, be deprived of its warming and cheering influence. May not his heart, too, be fired with its vital flames? Must he, and he alone, be fettered and chained down to the mere experience of the common herd? Or may he not rise above the earth likewise, and go on to perfection too? Let him go! Let him rise! Let him fix his aspiring gaze higher, yea upon the very spot where the Saviour sits at the right hand of God!

CONCLUSION.—Then let it be no longer said or supposed, that the Christian has a logical opponent on earth, respecting the principles of religion. There may be a *contention*, but surely there can be no debate, where there is no issue. The truth or falsity of the Christian religion is provable or disprovable, in the very nature of the case, only by the testimony of experimental Christians, and for an experimental Christian to testify against the truth of religion would be to testify that he was not an experimental Christian. The truth of religion is therefore not a *question*. It is a proposition, which, since the day of Pentecost, cannot be denied, with the faculties man is endowed with. Irreligion is a miserable abortion. Scepticism is a libel upon itself. God has placed His truth out of harm's way, and though man may make war upon his own principles—deny his own creed—act inconsistently with himself, and rebel against his own judgment—religion is not responsible for his inconsistencies.

A Homiletic Glance at the Acts of the Apostles.

Able expositions of the ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, describing the manners, customs, and localities described by the inspired writers ; also interpreting their words, and harmonizing their formal discrepancies, are, happily, not wanting amongst us. But the eduction of its widest truths and highest suggestions is still a felt desideratum. To some attempt at the work we devote these pages. We gratefully avail ourselves of all exegetical helps within our reach ; but to occupy our limited space with any lengthened archaeological, geographical, or philological remarks, would be to miss our aim ; which is not to make bare the mechanical process of the study of Scripture, but to reveal its spiritual results.

SECTION SECOND.—Acts i. 6—8.

“ When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel ? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you : and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”—Acts i. 6—8.

SUBJECT :—*Christ's last appearance to His disciples, and His last words on earth.*

FREQUENT were the interviews which the Heavenly Teacher had with His disciples previous to His death, and to those interviews we are indebted for much of His most elevated teaching. Rivers of truth, reflecting on their pellucid bosoms the brightest things of the upper heavens, and bearing life in their course, rose out of those delightful interviews. Some nine or ten times, too, He met them after His death ; but here is the *final* interview. The best things on earth must come to a close, and here closes the earthly history of the Great Son of God. The Divine drama is over, the curtain falls, and the Divine Actor quits the world in chariots of clouds. The place of this final meeting was the Mount of

Olives—a mount hard by the Holy City, lying to the east—a scene over which He had often passed, and where, before His death, He had often mingled with His disciples. The passage before us gives us His last words; and His last words were words of *correction, encouragement, direction and benediction.*

I. His last words were words of CORRECTION. The old prejudice, strange to say, of the disciples, came up on this hallowed occasion. “They asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” The meaning is—Tell us if thou art restoring. By the restoring, they meant making Israel the triumphant and the ruling power, the imperial mistress of the world. This had been the brilliant dream of their ancestors for ages, and it haunted them now. Their question indicated the working of several wrong elements in them, *materialism, prejudice, ambition* and *curiosity*. How *materialistic* were their ideas of empire. “They judged after the flesh.” Notwithstanding the spirituality of the teaching they had received from their Master, their notions of dominion were associated with material conquests, material thrones, and crowns, with all the pomp and pageantry of earthly kingdoms. That empire of truth and love which Christ came to establish over human souls, compared with which all earthly kingdoms were but as passing shadows, had not yet penetrated them with its transcendent glory. How strong, too, was their *prejudice*. Such a temporal dominion they had been taught to anticipate in the Jewish schools of their childhood. The idea they had not reached by conviction, but by tradition; without examining it, they had allowed it to grow with their growth. The three years’ teaching of Christ, which bore directly against such temporal ideas of dignity and dominion, had failed to shatter this old prejudice. It comes up now in their final meeting with their Master. *Ambition*, too, is seen at work in this question; they undoubtedly had an eye to temporal elevation. Probably they expected to be the leading ministers in such a kingdom, and to share its brilliant honors and

immunities. Idle *curiosity*, too, shows itself here. They were prying into that which lay out of their province ; they should have directed their curiosity, not to kingdoms, but to duties ; not to what they were to be, but what they were to do.

Now Christ directs words of *correction* to this morally mistaken state of mind. "It is not for you to know the times and seasons which the Father hath put in His own power." "Times and seasons" do not here mean the same thing ; the one denotes periods, the other junctures ; the one eras, the other epochs. Christ in His reply does not touch the question of empire itself. He does not say that there shall be no restoration of the kingdom, He leaves their errors on that subject to be corrected by that enlightening Spirit who was about to descend, and whom he bade them await at Jerusalem. He directs His reproof against their idle curiosity into the dark future of events, and His words served two purposes.

First : *They served to check the spirit of idle curiosity concerning the future.* Virtually, Christ says, "Let the future alone, it is a realm impenetrable to your vision. The future is to reveal itself in history, not to be ascertained by human inquiry. Your duty is with the present, out of which the future grows. Let the present be holy, and the future will be bright." Would that modern prophet-mongers would listen to this reproof !

Secondly : *They served as a ground for unbounded trust.* "The Father hath put in his own power." All futurities are in the jurisdiction of a Father. One who has the tenderest interest in us, and the most affectionate regard for us. It is a Father's love that hides from us the future. Were He to withdraw the veil, and make bare to us the events that are on their march, our social arrangements would be shattered, our free agency destroyed, and all our powers of action paralyzed. A Father manages the awful future, and a Father's loving hand hath woven the veil that conceals it from mortal gaze.

II. His last words were words of ENCOURAGEMENT. "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come

upon you." Or, in the more literal translation in the margin, "Ye shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you." The power here promised may be either a cause or an effect—the power of the Holy Ghost exerted on them, or the power wrought in them by the Holy Ghost. Though the power came to them in both ways, yet the latter is the form which these words seem to promise. They were, to use the language of Luke, in another place (Luke xxiv. 49), "To be endued with power from on high." The power with which they were endued was of two kinds, *miraculous* and *moral*. The spirit that descended on them on the day of Pentecost enabled them to work mighty marvels. "Signs and wonders" followed them in working out their apostolic mission. But the *moral* power with which they were endued—the power that made them brave, faithful, magnanimous, self-sacrificing, and successful in their mission, was, for many reasons, greater than the *miraculous*. Both kinds of power, however, came to them with the advent of that Holy Ghost which Christ now promised, and which was just at hand. This, His last word of *encouragement*, was exquisitely opportune. The reproof which He had dealt them in reply to their inquiry concerning the restoration of the kingdom, would be felt by them as caustic and severe. This promise of power comes as a healing balm. The power He promises infinitely transcends the political power of kingdoms; before it, the might of the Cæsars is inanity. It was a power to change the heart of kings, to regulate the springs of empire, to mould the governments of the world. The advent of this power would supply His absence, and its operations would deepen upon the heart of the world the impressions of His doctrine, widen the range of His influence, and work His wise and heavenly purposes to a triumphant issue. This power would build up His kingdom in the world. A kingdom, His, far sublimer than that which loomed in the vision of the disciples now. The old, gorgeous, theocratic kingdom of Israel was but a faint type of His. The grandest earthly dynasties are shadows to it. Napoleon Bonaparte,

in a conversation with General Bertrand a little before his death, said :—" Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne, and I, have founded empires ; but on what have we rested the creations of our genius ? Upon *force*. No one but Jesus has founded an empire on *love*, and at this moment millions of men would die for Him. It was not a day, nor a battle, that won the victory over the world for the Christian religion. No ! it was a long war, a fight of three centuries, begun by the apostles and continued by their successors and the Christian generations that followed. In that war all the kings and powers of the earth were on one side ; and on the other side I see no army, but a mysterious force, and a few men scattered here and there through all parts of the world, who had no rallying point but their faith in the mysteries of the Cross. I die before my time, and my body will be put into the ground to become the food of worms. Such is the fate of the Great Napoleon ! What an abyss between my deep wretchedness and Christ's eternal kingdom, proclaimed, loved, adored, and spreading through the world. Was that dying ? Was it not rather to live ?" This "mysterious force," of which the conqueror of Europe speaks, we are accustomed to call "the power of God ;" a phrase which implies belief in a living, Divine energy.

III. His last words were words of DIRECTION. "Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." The Greek word *μάρτυς* translated "witness," has given us the word "martyr." Because the men who were the faithful witnesses of the facts of Christ's history were exposed to suffering and death, martyr and witness became almost synonyms. The words of *direction* which Christ here gives, point to three things.

First : *The nature of their ministry.* They were to be "witnesses ;" they were to declare what they had actually seen, and heard, and felt in relation to Christ. Hence their preaching at first was little more than an honest and fervid

declaration of *facts* concerning Christ which had been demonstrated to them. (Chap. ii. 22—36; iii. 12—33; iv. 8—12; v. 29—32.) These men left all the theorizing about these facts for the weaker, but more pretentious, men of later ages.

Secondly : *The universality of their ministry.* They were not to confine their labors to any district, or tribe, or nation ; they were to go to the “uttermost parts of the earth.” The wide world, including Jew and Gentile, and all the races of man, was their field. “They were to go into all the world,” &c. Christ’s philanthropy embraces the world ; His system of mercy is for universal man. The grand commission He gave His apostles was so ecumenical that the world becomes their field of labor.

Thirdly : *The method of their ministry.* They were to “begin in Jerusalem, then proceed through all Judæa, then through Samaria, then through the uttermost parts of the earth.” They followed this order. They began in Jerusalem ; the great Pentecostal work began there. They seem to have remained working in this city for nearly eight years. The martyrdom of Stephen was the means of drawing them forth into various parts of Judæa, and into Samaria. (Chap. viii.) Afterwards they proceeded to the “uttermost part of the earth.” During the apostolic age, the Gospel was preached throughout most of the known world. (Rom. x. 18 ; Col. i. 6, 23.) In this method of propagating the Gospel, we discover two things. (1) Unexampled mercy. Offering mercy first to His greatest enemies. (2) Consummate policy. It was for reasons most wise, which we have elsewhere explained, that Christ instituted this method.* Well would it have been for Christianity, if the Church, in her missionary efforts, had practically observed this method.

IV. His last words were words of BENEDICTION. We gather this, not from the text, but from the account which Luke gives in his gospel. “And he led them out as far as

* Vol. v., p. 32.

to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them." (Luke xxiv. 50.) "He lifted up his hands," an attitude expressive of sentiments most inspiring and uplifting. "He blessed them." In what sweet words did He pour out His parting benediction. What were the valedictory utterances of this great Friend of sinners? They are not recorded; perhaps, they are wisely and mercifully omitted from the sacred page.



Germ of Thought.

SUBJECT :—*The Incomparable Priesthood.*

"Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life."—Heb. vii. 16.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Twenty-first.

PRIESTHOOD and sin are coeval in human history; the former implies the latter, and is at once its undoubted proof and intended antidote. The shrine and the sinner, the bleeding victim, and the guilty conscience, are, and ever have been, intimately associated the world over. That the idea of priesthood started at first, from the breast of the sinner, we would rather deny than admit. Albeit, the idea is so congruous with the deep felt want of sinful humanity, that it has had only to be suggested in order to be held ever after with an unrelaxable tenacity. The Holy Word reveals a Divinely-appointed priesthood, whose characteristics and history occupy no small portion of its sacred pages. Three ideas seem essentially connected with priesthood. *Sacrifice*:—"Every priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices." *Vicariousness*:—"A priest is ordained for man "in things pertaining to God." He stands in the place of others. *Benediction*:—"The Lord, we are told, separated the tribe of Levi to bless in His name. (Deut. x. 8.)

"Aaron lifted up his hands towards the people and blessed them." These ideas which the old Aaronic priests embodied, have their highest realization in the priesthood of Christ. The word *representative* would, perhaps, cover all the priestly functions of Christ. He represents man to the Infinite Father, and the Infinite Father to man. The Eternal looks upon humanity through Christ; and through Christ, humanity is to look up to Him. Whatever the priesthood of Christ accomplishes, and it accomplishes infinitely more than we can comprehend, it does not effect either of the following things:—*Any change in the Divine mind respecting man, any mitigation of the enormity of moral evil, or any change in the obligations of moral law.* The text suggests two ideas illustrative of the unequal glory of Christ's priesthood.*

I. HIS PRIESTHOOD IS NOT AN ARBITRARY ORDINANCE, BUT A NECESSARY FACT. "Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment." The law (*νόμον*) here means the Levitical law, after which the Jewish priests were made, and the "commandment" (*ἐντολῆς*) the particular precept respecting the appointment of priests. The whole Levitical arrangement was *arbitrary* in the sense that it might have been otherwise; it did not grow out of the nature of things. It might not have been: there was no absolute necessity for its existence, or it might have been different. The priestly order might have come from another tribe than that of Levi. The opposite, however, is the fact in relation to the priesthood of Christ. It is after the power (*δυναμιν*) of an endless life. Christ is a priest by His inherent personal energy.

* There is, say Webster and Wilkinson, in their unsurpassed Greek Testament, an opposition here of *νόμος* to *δύναμις*, of *ἐντολή* to *ζωή* of *σαρκικός* to *ἀκατάλυτος*. The Levitical priests were appointed by a statute which prescribed that they should be descended from Aaron; Christ Jesus, in the face of that statute, by his inherent personal energy. The statute was an arbitrary prescript; the energy was the manifestation of a person. The prescript was but fleshly, perishable. The person was indissoluble, unchangeable, everlasting. *εζρκιῶνης* is probably the right reading, but in the sense of *σαρκικῆς*.

First : *Christ is a Priest by the necessity of His own nature.* He is a priest because of what He is :—God-man. He is, by the necessity of His own nature, the Great Priest of the race. Men get into important offices now, as under the Levitical economy, by *the law of a carnal commandment.* Some conventional arrangement in society often puts the ignoble on thrones, the corrupt on the bench, and the small in places of power and influence. The *conventional* ordination to an office is one thing, and the *natural* ordination another, and often an opposite thing. “The law of a carnal commandment” often puts men in offices for which they have no natural aptitude. Christ’s ordination to the priesthood was *natural*, “after the power of an endless life.” If our sun is to be what it is, it must be the centre of our system. If Christ is God-man, He must be Priest. As man thinks and feels, and resolves, not on account of any arbitrary appointment, but because of the essential powers of his nature, so Christ acts as a Priest.

Secondly : *Christ is a Priest by the necessity of depraved souls.* If sinners are to be saved, He must be a priest. The Levitical priesthood had no necessary connection with the spiritual recovery of man, but the priesthood of Christ has. No being in the universe but He can meet the essential wants, and realize the aspirations of the human soul. He is the light to its eyes, the air to its lungs, the bread to its life ; without Him “we can do nothing.” Men were saved before the Aaronic priesthood was commenced, and have been saved by millions since it has passed into obsolescence ; but not one has ever been saved without the Priestship of Christ. His priesthood, then, springs from a *LIFE*, not from a *commandment*.

II. HIS PRIESTHOOD IS NOT A TEMPORARY ORDINANCE, BUT AN ENDLESS POWER. “After the power of an endless life.” The word “endless” stands in antithesis to “carnal.” Christ’s priesthood sprang from the power of an *endless life*, not from the power of a *dying commandment*.

First: *His priesthood was not for the mere temporal interests of mankind.* The old Jewish priesthood, though it had ulterior spiritual aims, was designed for many sanitary and temporal purposes. Christ's priesthood, whilst it serves the temporal interests of mankind, has to do mainly and vitally with the soul, the "endless life" of a man.

Secondly: *His priesthood was not merely for the spiritual interest of the soul in time.* The salvation of the soul from its error, its lust, its guilt, and miseries while here, is a great work, but this does not measure the work of Christ. His priesthood is after—is constituted for the exigencies of the "endless life" in humanity. His priesthood measures the everlasting requirements and possibilities of the human soul. Every soul has the "power of an endless life;" it has a dynamic energy in it which will go on expanding for ever. The soul whilst here reaches a high point of development. Pascal, Newton, Milton, how much they grew *while here!* but the extent of their growth *while here*, compared with the possibilities of their development, were infinitely less than the tiniest blade to the hugest monarch of the forest. It is when I think that one soul shall, in a distant future, know more, feel more, remember more, accomplish more, than all created existences could do at the present moment, and that this "power of an endless life" belongs to every soul, that I make some feeble effort to measure the magnitude of that priesthood which is ordained for the exigencies of the "endless life" of untold millions. His priesthood stretches over all souls, runs through all times, fills all future ages, and will ever be the breath of the redeemed. Eternity will find him a Lamb in the midst of the throne, arresting every eye, engrossing every heart, and transporting into celestial raptures every spirit.

SUBJECT :—*Life Lessons.*

“When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat? And this he said to prove him,” &c.—John vi. 5—14.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Twenty-second.

WE shall deprive ourselves of a large amount of truth if we look upon the words of Christ as the only medium through which He sought to instruct the human race. “His life was the light of men.” Not merely His assertions, but His actions also are full of meaning. His every deed was a discourse; His whole experience was an exhortation. His works were monitors as well as His words. Whether you mark Him sitting on the grassy slope of the mountain, or wrestling with the adversary in the solitude of the desert; whether you behold Him at the festive board of the marriage party, or silencing the surging waves of the angry sea; wherever you see Him, or however, you meet with matchless teachings of love and wisdom. The narrative before our attention is one of the most remarkable and instructive chapters from the book of our Saviour’s life. Looking at it in a moral point of view, what are some of the teachings which it suggests and illustrates?

I. THE BENEVOLENCE OF CHRIST AND CHRISTIANITY. The chief glory of the Supreme Being consists not so much in His spotless purity, surpassing wisdom, or boundless power, as in His love. It is this which makes Him “the high and lofty one.” When Moses of old said, “show me thy glory,” the response was, “I will cause my goodness to pass before thee.” This is what God did in Christ; His whole manifestation was a revelation of His infinite benevolence. This influence is seen in the miracle under consideration. There are two characteristics of the beneficence of Christ and Christianity observable in it. (1) It is *comprehensive*.

It embraces the *spiritual and secular* wants of man. Christ had been preaching, and thus supplying the spiritual necessities of humanity. He had been speaking of God's love and forgiveness, man's duty and destiny ; in other words, ministering to the moral part of human nature. This is ever the work of Christianity. Man cannot be really blessed, excepting his heart and conscience are made "right with God." But Jesus did not stop here. He remembered that man has also a physical nature. When He saw that the people were hungry, He provided bread. This is another trait of true and Christian benevolence. It does not overlook material and secular interests. Indeed, we shall never be successful in preaching the Gospel to those who are but half fed and clothed. Experience is constantly showing how material poverty produces moral evil. Misery leads to vice. (2) It is *liberal*. There was "enough and to spare" of the food provided. Twelve basketfuls of the fragments were collected, "so that," as a quaint divine said, "each of the apostles could take something home for his family or friends." The benevolence of true Christianity is ever of this order. It not only gives, but gives with a princely and bountiful hand. It will not bestow in one year more pounds upon an article of luxury, than shillings upon a missionary society or a faithful minister's salary.

II. APPARENTLY SMALL CAUSES MAY PRODUCE LARGE RESULTS. Well might Andrew, when he glanced at the five loaves and two small fishes, and then at the vast multitude, say, "What are these among so many?" But through His power, who "taketh up the isles as a very little thing," the seemingly inadequate and insignificant causes produced the grand effect of supplying the appetitive wants of more than five thousand people. Marvellous as this might seem, it is not more wonderful than what is taking place every day. God is "doing wonders still." The *few grains* producing the golden ears of corn, the *tiny seed* bringing forth the gay flowers, the *little spark* igniting forests and cities,

destroying the work of years and centuries—are illustrations of this. So in the sphere of intellect. The history of the most important scientific discoveries is pregnant with exhibitions of this principle. For instance: the law of gravitation was discovered by the falling of an apple; the power of steam by the rising of a tea-kettle lid; the method of ascertaining the specific gravities of bodies by the rising of water in a bath. Is it not so in the moral world? A few words may decide a man's destiny for eternity. The resistance or non-resistance of an apparently small temptation may fix a character for ever. A small band of earnest and godly men, may, by sowing in the popular heart the seeds of imperishable truth, produce a moral revolution. This should teach us not to "despise the day of small things." What is externally weak may be inwardly strong. Christianity looks back to a handful of disciples in an "upper room." David, although a poor shepherd lad, killed Goliath, the terror and foe of a nation. Then let the workers for the world's weal not be discouraged, if their efforts should appear feeble and impotent. "In due season thou shalt reap."

III. THE UNION OF SPIRITUAL SENTIMENTS WITH SECULAR PURSUITS. When standing at the bar of Pilate, our Lord declared, "To this end came I into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth." Christ came to remind men of truths they had forgotten; to set before them, stamped with His authority, duties they had ignored. He bore witness to the Divine existence, the Divine providence, human depravity, human responsibility, by His own existence on earth, by pointing to the fowls and beasts, by speaking of the prodigal son, and by the parable of the talents. Just so with respect to the relation existing between things sacred and secular. Men had forgotten that they are related to each other. Business was divorced from religion. In the miracle of the loaves and fishes, the Great Teacher silently but forcibly corrects the error

and condemns the sin. He unites the secular and spiritual. He "took the loaves;" there was a secular act. "He gave thanks;" there was a spiritual act. We are taught here that our religion is to be a thing of everyday life. It is not to be confined to congregations, hymns, and Sabbaths; it is to go with us to the social hearth, the exchange, and the haunts of pleasure; it is to be carried out in our education, politics, and commerce. It is not to be a lamp hung up in only one of the apartments of life, but a sun irradiating with its light, and gilding with its lustre every locality in which we move. "Whether ye eat or drink, do all to the glory of God." There is much talk about orthodoxy now-a-days. We are well-nigh sick of the endless hair-splittings of sectarians. What if we were more anxious for orthodoxy of motive, spirit, and conduct? What if we judged him the true heretic who makes loud professions in the house of worship, but forgets them in the house of trade? Would it not be better? One of the great wants of the times is this union of the secular and spiritual.

IV. THE PRACTICE OF ECONOMY IN THE USE OF GOD'S GIFTS. "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." While the Son of Man was liberal, He was not extravagant; although bountiful, He did not let generosity degenerate into waste. This was in beautiful accordance with the operations of God in nature. There is the utmost economy there. Nothing is cast aside as useless. The small and great pass through certain changes, but never perish. Look at the leaves, which in the autumnal season cover our path; when living, they provided a medium of nourishment to the tree, and afforded a cool retreat for man and beast from the noontide heat; when dead and scattered on the ground, they serve many purposes—they enrich the soil, and add to the atmosphere those gaseous ingredients essential to a healthful air. They give a theme to the poet and moralist, and a text to the theologian. Like a prudent matron, nature evermore "gathers up

the fragments that remain," and, as the result of her care, "nothing" is "lost." Let us, then, from the works of God in nature, and God in Christ, learn a lesson of economy—not penuriousness, nor selfishness—but economy, a prudent and wise conduct towards the blessings He bestows. With respect to *experience, physical and mental strength, time*, let us see that nothing is lost. Economy in the use of such boons as these will evince our appreciation of them. Such are some of the teachings which underlie the passage from evangelic history before us. Be it ours to take them home to our hearts and incarnate them in our daily experience. If we do this, our existence will be marked by dignity and greatness; we shall, to some humble extent, accomplish the high end of our being; the sunlight of God's smile will irradiate the path of life; and year by year we shall be more truly fitted for that nobler realm of thought and action, where sin is unknown, sorrow an eternal stranger, and God "all and in all."

THOMAS R. STEVENSON.



SUBJECT :—*The World wrong in its Foundations.*

"All the foundations of the earth are out of course. I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High. But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes. Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations."—Psalm lxxxii. 5—8.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Twenty-third.

THIS Psalm refers to magistrates and kings, and brings under our attention (1) *The lofty position they occupy.* They are called "gods." I have said, "Ye are gods." It is remarkable that the Bible should dignify earthly rulers with the name of *Elohim*, and the Almighty Himself speaks of Moses as a "god," to Pharaoh. The office of magistrate is Divine, and the Bible teaches us to honor it. (2) *The presence of God in their*

midst. "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty ; he judgeth among the gods." He is ever present with rulers. He is in the chamber of statesmen, the courts of justice, and in the palace of kings. He standeth there to see whether justice is done. (3) *The cardinal rule of their office.* "How long will ye judge," &c. It is justice to the poor as well as the rich. "Ye shall not respect persons in judgment, but ye shall hear the small as well as the great," &c. (Deut. i. 17.) (4) *The wicked perversion of their power.* They judged unjustly" when they accepted the "persons of the wicked." They were ignorant too, "they know not, neither will they understand." Though their office was "Divine," their conduct in their office was *devilish*. The higher the office a bad man fills, the more execrable is his conduct. As the result of the depravity of these magistrates, the whole country was in anarchy and distress, "the foundations of the world were out of course." We shall regard the words as suggesting three things :—

I. THE RADICAL WRONGNESS OF THE WORLD. "The *foundations* are out of course." This is true in the widest and deepest sense. (1) Look at the "foundation" of man's character *individually*. Is the individual character of man built upon right principles? With the exception of that small minority who are the genuine disciples of Christ, we answer, No ! The true foundation of character is the supremacy of the spiritual over the carnal, and the Divine over the human ; but, generally, men's characters are organized upon principles which are the direct opposites to these. They put the carnal above the spiritual, the human above the Divine. (2) Look at the "foundation" of man's character *socially*. What is the state of society, upon what terms do men fulfil their social functions, and live their social life? In other words, what is the basis of the social system? Is it honesty, truth, benevolence? Does each one, as a member of the social body, labor for the good of the whole? We fear the opposite of these principles underlie the social life of the

world. Falsehood, fraud, cupidity, and intensified selfishness, form the world's platform of social action. (3) Look at the "foundation" of man's character *politically*. Is righteousness the foundation of kingdoms? Is the grand aim of governments to develop the rights of men, and to deal out justice to all? Nay! the many are generally sacrificed to the few, and the principles of rectitude are surrendered for a miserable expediency. (4) Look at the "foundation" of man's character *religiously*. Who is the God that the world worships? Is it the God of the New Testament, the God and Father of Jesus and His holy apostles, or the gods of human passions and religious theories? Who can think upon the principles that ought to govern men in every movement and relation of life, in connection with those that actually control them, without saying, "Verily, the foundations are out of course." There are crises and junctures, which often strike into our deepest heart the conviction that the "foundations of the earth are out of course." There are events, which, like earthquakes, make the world quiver in every nerve. Alas for us, the stream is poisoned at the fountain, the tree is rotten at the root, the edifice is unsound in its foundation, the world-house is built upon the sand. The text suggests:—

II. THE EPHEMERAL DISTINCTIONS OF THE WORLD. Here are persons dignified with the name of "gods" and "children of the most High"—official designations—who are reminded of that death which is the common lot of all. (1) The most illustrious must meet with a *common event*. "They die like men." He who is chief in the most elevated ranks of life must die as the obscurest in life's lowest grades. The same dismembering of earthly ties, the same convulsive recoils from dissolution, the same cold shivers, the same long home in the grave. "All flesh is grass," &c. "He bringeth the princes to nothing, he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity." "Yea, they shall not be planted," &c. *Mors sceptrâ, ligonitus aequat—Death mingles sceptres with spades.* (2) The most illustrious will meet with this common end in

a way *peculiar to themselves*. “Fall like one of the princes.” There are feelings which a *prince* must have in dying, utterly unknown to the dying man in humble life ;—feelings, methinks, that add agony and horror to the hour. Other things being equal, death would be easier in a hovel than in a palace. How vain, then, are all the adventitious distinctions of earth ! How foolish for those who possess them to pride themselves in them ; and how foolish for those who possess them not to set their hearts eagerly on them. “The fashion of the world is passing away.” The most lovely flowers of the garden wither as the grass. Old winter strips the giant oak, as well as the sapling willow.

“The glories of our birth and state
Are shadows, not substantial things ;
There is no armour against fate ;
Death lays his icy hands on kings.
Sceptre and crown
Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.”

The text suggests :—

III. THE TRUE HOPE OF THE WORLD. “Arise, O God, judge the earth : for thou shalt inherit all nations.” (1) *This cry is one of the deepest cries of universal man.* Hengstenberg renders these words thus : “Lift up thyself, O God, judge the earth.” This cry in some form or other goes up to Heaven in every language under the sky. From villages, towns, and cities, where the bloody tide of invasive war is hurling its billows at the door ; from the home of the refugee, and the scene where the tyrant exiles all who are hostile to his will ; from dungeons, where tyranny has chained the patriot, and persecution has incarcerated the saint ; from the plantations of slavery, and the fields of bloody war ; wherever a sense of injustice has struck itself into the deep heart of man, this cry goes up to Heaven, “Arise, O God.” “There is no hope but in thee, thine arm is mighty,” &c. (2) *This cry implies*

the want of confidence in all creature instrumentality. Men have tried to put the world right. Moralists, statesmen, philanthropists, saints, have all tried. Every age has been rife with remedial schemes, but all have proved ineffective. The "foundations" are wrong. No arm can reach and alter them but the arm of God. "Arise, O God," &c. (3) *This cry involves a confidence in the possibility of securing Divine interposition.* What rational spirit would cry to Him if it believed that His assistance was unattainable. Men have an *instinctive* faith in the power of prayer. Thank God, we have abundant evidence of its efficiency, in the Bible, in the memoirs of the good, and in our own experience. "Call upon me in the day of trouble," &c.



SUBJECT :—*Forgiving, a condition of receiving Forgiveness.*

"Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."—Matt. vi. 12.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Twenty-fourth.

THIS is a part of our Lord's inimitably beautiful model prayer. We are taught to repeat it in infancy. It is possible to become familiar with *words*—the material medium of thought—without comprehending the *thought*. This prayer is rich in idea; but persons often repeat it without understanding its phrases. "Our Father, which art in heaven." What beauty! How full of meaning! "Our." The first word is a rebuke to pride, and a protest against selfishness. Man everywhere—rich or poor, black or white—may say, "Our Father." An endearing and enduring relation. "In heaven." Earthly fathers die, &c. A comprehensive and interesting distinction. "Hallowed be Thy Name." Let it be thought of and uttered with reverence. "Thy kingdom come." It is right. "Thy will be done." It is best. "Give us," &c. Supply our physical necessities. "And forgive us our debts as

we forgive our debtors." This is the only phrase the Saviour expounds, and as if to impress our minds with its significance and importance, He amplifies it, "For if ye forgive," &c. "But if ye forgive not," &c. In the text we have pointed out:—

I. A TWOFOLD GUILT. "Our debts," and "our debtors."

First : *The wrong we have done to God.* "Forgive us our debts." We need no argument to convince us that we have sinned against God. When we think of what we ought to have *been*, and what we ought to have *done*, and then think what we *have been*, and what we *have done*—we have self-evident, overwhelming proofs of our guilt. To realize these convictions, we need to *think*. We need to be reminded of our sins, that our hearts may be rightly *imprest*, that we may feel a proper sorrow for the past, and exercise a greater vigilance for the future. We have sinned against God—(1) *By what we have not done*, we are "debtors;" and—(2) *By what we have done*, we are "trespassers." "We have all sinned, and come short," &c.

Secondly : *The wrong others have done to us.* "As we forgive our debtors." Sin not only wrongs God and the sinner himself, but it wrongs MAN. Every sinner has wronged *us*; and we, by every sin, have wronged others. We are members of the social body; when *one* suffers, *all* suffer. These facts are too complicated for us to analyze, but they lie at the very base of moral principles. While it is true, in a general sense, that others have wronged us, and are our debtors, it may be further true that they have done it in some special or particular sense. (1) *By ungrounded suspicions.* (2) *By unkind words.* (3) *By selfish projects.* (4) *By malicious deeds, &c.* In the text we have pointed out:—

II. A DOUBLE FORGIVENESS. "Forgive us," and "we forgive others."

First : *The forgiveness we seek of God.* "Forgive us." This can be obtained. Ample provisions have been made in

the economy of grace; and God's forgiveness is *free, frank, and full*.

Secondly: *The forgiveness we are to extend to others.* As "we forgive others." That God may forgive us, we must see our error, feel our guilt, express our sorrow, and seek, in a proper way, our restoration to His favor, &c.; and when He forgives, it is not in the *spirit* of those who say, "they will forgive, but CANNOT FORGET." So, when our debtors see their error, feel their guilt, &c., we are bound, as men and as Christians, to forgive them, and to restore them to our confidence and affection. In the text we are taught:—

III. A TESTING PRINCIPLE. *We ask God to forgive us, on condition that we forgive others.* Forgive us "as" we forgive. This is a testing principle. The Saviour knew it to be so, and hence he expounded it fully when the prayer was finished. If we do not forgive, we are not in a *state* to be forgiven; and if we ask God to forgive us as we forgive our debtors, and yet cherish *anger* or *revenge*, we in reality ask, "God be ANGRY, &c., with us." "Forgive us our debts, AS we forgive," &c. JOHN TAYLOR.

Biblical Exegesis.

THE TENSES IN NEW TESTAMENT GREEK.

I. *The Present.* In Greek, as in all languages, this tense "designates an action present and still incomplete." But there are several variations of the use of this tense in the Greek of the New Testament, which are well worthy of notice.

(1) It is used to express a *general truth*, or an *habitual custom*, and then it virtually includes both *past* and *future* time. (John xiv. 6.) οὐδεὶς ἔρχεται πρὸς τὸν πατέρα, εἰ μὴ δι' ἐμοῦ. "No one comes to the Father, except through me."

As a Divine appointment, and as an historical fact, Christ is the only medium of access to God. He is "the true (and the only) way to life." (Col. iii. 6.) Δι' αὐτοῦ ἔρχεται ἡ ὁργὴ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπὶ τοὺς υἱοὺς τῆς ἀπειθείας. According to the laws of God's moral government, "the wrath of God comes," i.e., certainly will, has, and must, come upon every sinner, (Matt. xi. 3.) Σὺ εἶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος; "Art thou the *Comer*?" In the name of Christ *past* and *future* time are included. To the Jewish Church the Messiah was "The *Comer*;" for He was the subject of 4000 years of prophecy; and He is "the *Comer*" to the Christian Church; for His second advent will alone secure the consummation of the sublimest hopes of all His people.

(2) Sometimes the present tense is used so as to extend to past time only. (John viii. 58.) Πρὶν Ἀβραάμ γενέσθαι, ἐγώ εἰμι. "Before Abraham existed, I am." What an indisputable proof is this passage of the fact of the pre-existence of Christ: the first step of that "grand argument," the climax of which is concealed amidst the uncreated glories of the Divine Son of God.

(3) The present is sometimes used to express "a foreseen evil," as it were, a fated future. This use of the present tense is not unusual in the classics. Sophocles says (Phil. cxiii.) Αἶρεῖ τὰ τόξα ταῦτα τὴν Τροίαν μόνα. "These are the arrows which alone *destroy* (are fatal to overturn) Troy." Gal. iii. 8. Προϊδοῦσα δὲ ἡ γραφή, ὅτι ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοῦ τὰ ἔθνη ὁ θεός. "God *justifieth* the Gentiles from faith." The present is used to express the invariable rule, ground, or law of justification. We never justified man in any other mode. (2 Peter iii. 11.) ἐξῆλθεν οὖν ὁ λόγος οὗτος εἰς τοὺς ἀδελφούς, ὅτι ὁ μαθητὴς ἐκεῖνος οὐκ ἀποθνήσκει. "There went out this report among the brethren, that this disciple does not die." It was believed that John was not *destined* to die. This tradition reached down to the time of Augustine.

(4) A close sequence of events is well expressed by the present. (Matt. ii. 13.) ἰδοὺ ἄγγελος κυρίου φαίνεται κατ' ὄναρ τῷ Ἰωσήφ, λεγὼν. "*Appears* to Joseph in a dream," &c. A more striking illustration is found—(2 Cor. v. 1.) οἶδαμεν γὰρ ὅτι εἰάν ἡ ἐπιγείος ἡμῶν οἰκία τοῦ σκηνῶν καταλυθῇ, οἰκοδομῇ ἐκ θεοῦ εχομεν. κ. τ. λ. "The *instantaneous* entrance into a new habitation, the *moment* the καταλύεσθαι takes place, is intended to be exprest." "*Absent* from the body, *present* with the Lord."

(5) In other passages, the present is used to denote "what is just about to take place, what one is intending to effect, and which he has made the necessary preparations to do." (John x. 32.) Διὰ ποῖον αὐτῶν ἔργον λιθαρίζετε με; "For which of these works *do* ye stone me?" They had *already* (ver. 31.) taken up stones to stone him. (John xiii. 6.) Κύριε, σὺ μοῦ νίπτεις τοὺς πόδας; "O Lord *dost* thou *wash* my feet?" He had already prepared to wash them. (John xiii. 27.) ὃ ποιεῖς, ποίησον τάχιον. "That which thou *doest*, with which thou art now occupied, *do* quickly." What a proof is this passage of the omniscience of Christ; and what a confirmation of the wonderful words, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished."

The Christian Year.

BY A CLERGYMAN.

The Twentieth Sunday after Trinity.

"And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment."—Matt. xxii. 11.

THE parable from which the text is taken, gives us a large idea of God's munificence towards mankind. The final command to the messengers to go into the highways was indeed occasioned by the unworthiness of them who were first bidden; and St. Paul represents the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles as, in some sort, a consequence of the unbelief of the Jews. Yet it is evident, from the declarations of the prophets, from the apostolic commission, and from the very nature of the Gospel, that this Jewish unbelief was only an accidental occasion of the evangelization of the Gentiles, and

that God's intention from the first was to make provision for the whole race, that the inexhaustible supply might have a proportionate number of partakers, and "the wedding be furnished with guests."

The blessings which God has provided and offers, are set forth under the image of a *feast*, a figure which is very usual in Scripture.

A feast implies *satisfaction*. He who has learnt by experience the truth of the Royal Preacher's sentence concerning worldly pleasure, or is able to take on his word that *all is vanity*—he who is conscious of vast and mysterious desires, which make earthly good insipid, and leave an infinite longing behind ; who feels that he was born for something better—for the knowledge of truth, the admiration of rectitude, the vision of perfection—will find this representation of a feast, in which such desires are to be satisfied, most attractive. Our capacities and desires were given to our nature by God, and this implied a provision for the satisfaction of them. Christ announces in the text a provision appropriate to the characteristic needs of our nature. Great, indeed, is God's love, both in endowing us with the capacity and in making the provision.

There is a *mystery* about our needs and desires, which, in the present state, will always to a great extent remain covered. We partly know what we need and what we desire, but we know only in part. God's provision for us has a corresponding character of mystery. The feast will not only include all which we know we want, but will fill our mysterious longing and supply all our unknown needs. It will take us by surprise.

Amongst men, invitation to a feast is a *token of friendship*. Thus friendship often begins ; thus it is confirmed ; and thus, if it has been interrupted, is reconciliation ratified. The guests in the parable are the friends of the king. Friendship with God is a conception which perhaps would never have entered within the field of unaided human speculation. It is a blessing so stupendous, that, even if suggested, it would

hardly have been hoped for by human presumption. Yet it is plainly and usually spoken of in the Bible. In our case, the existence of friendship with God involves a *reconciliation*. We have been alienated from Him by our sins. He has in mercy provided a means for our restoration, and He bids us to the feast in token of pardon and renewed friendship.

This feast is given *on occasion of a marriage*, and that the marriage of the king's son. This gives it a peculiarly dignified and joyous character. It is of all feasts the most festive. It is characteristic of our Lord's parables, that the same subject is often represented under various aspects in the same parable. So here—while it is men that are bidden to the feast and the king's son is Christ, the *bride* can be no other than human nature, and the marriage is that between Christ and His Church, or is the incarnation in which that is involved. We read of three great sacramental feasts—one past, another present, and the third still future ; the *Passover*, to commemorate Israel's redemption from bondage, and their exemption when the first-born of Egypt were smitten ; the *Lord's Supper*, which shows forth the Lord's death ; and the *Marriage Supper of the Lamb*, which will celebrate the fulfilment of all God's promises in Christ. So near and dear is the relation into which God's grace brings Him with redeemed man, that there is no existing human relation tender enough to set it forth. Now He is a Friend, then a Father or a Brother ; here a Bridegroom. And as in the east the bridegroom was wont to purchase the bride, so Christ has " purchased His Church with His own blood."

To this feast, then, mankind are now bidden ; one which will satisfy their desires, supply their known and unknown wants, surprise them by magnitude and richness of blessing, fill them with true and mighty joy, and ratify their reconciliation with God—even the Marriage Supper of Christ and His Church, of God and humanity.

Let us now observe the conduct of those who were bidden. *They would not come.* Some of them *made light of it*, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandize.

Their conduct seems incredible, involving as it does a two-fold affront to the king—rebellion, since his invitation was a command ; ingratitude, since his command was an invitation ; and both command and invitation were in honor of the marriage of his son. But it is intended to set forth our monstrous guilt, if, having been bidden to Gospel blessings, we trifle with the offer of God's friendship, throw contempt on the Divine bridals, and thus manifest disobedience and unthankfulness towards Heaven.

Another company of those who were bidden conceived animosity against the king's messengers, *took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them*—a most daring and outrageous display of ungrateful rebellion. Persecution for Christ's sake has often been active in the past. It is crippled now, at least in England ; and let us hope and pray that God in His mercy will avert the recovery of the monster.

As they who were originally bidden, were “not worthy,” as they had not the obedience and gratitude suitable for guests, their absence was no loss, and the king resolved on filling their place with others, whom they would, but He did not, despise. “Go ye therefore into the highways.” This last expedient was successful : “The wedding was furnished with guests.” The distinction of “bad and good” amongst those who are now obedient to the call, may be intended to mark, on the one hand, such converts to Christianity, as, like some of the Corinthians, had grossly sinned, and, on the other, such as, like Cornelius the centurion, had feared God, and performed moral and religious duties.

But there is a further distinction even amongst these : “And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there *a man which had not on a wedding garment.*” This man also was guilty of a grievous affront to the king. He had come in ordinary clothing to the royal wedding ; and if what some say is true, he had also rejected the garment which the king's magnificent liberality had provided for him as a guest. At any rate, he was unfit, and unfit by his own fault.

It is necessary, not only that we present ourselves as guests at the Gospel feast, it is necessary also that we do it *in a becoming manner*, lest, after all, we be rejected as despisers of the king. As this wedding garment is made prominent in the parable, it is important to ascertain what it is intended to signify. In the New Testament Scriptures, various single Christian virtues are compared to raiment, which it is required of us to put on. "Be clothed with *humility*." (1 Pet. v. 5.) "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of *mercies*, *kindness*, *humbleness of mind*, *meekness*, *longsuffering*. . . . And above all these things, put on *charity*, which is the bond of perfectness." (Col. iii. 12.)

This, however, it should be remembered, is a *wedding garment*, and therefore, were there any one virtue in particular which had an exclusive claim to be regarded as represented by it, it must be the virtue of *social joy*, which rejoices with the rest, and above all with the joy of the Lord of the feast. It is a test of friendship with Christ and His people, that we are able to rejoice with them; that what gives Him joy gives us also joy. "The *friend* of the bridegroom *rejoiceth greatly* when he heareth the bridegroom's voice." Doubtless the grace of joy enters largely into the texture of the wedding garment. Still the ability to rejoice with Christ and His people depends on something else. In the chapter just now quoted (Col. iii.), an expression is used, which is evidently intended to signify the sum of Christian graces: "Ye have put on *the new man*." But as these graces are all mutually connected, so all of them together are dependent on something which is beyond and higher than themselves. In his Epistle to the Romans (xiii. 14), St. Paul uses a remarkable expression, which alone seems adequate to that fulness of meaning which belongs to the wedding garment: *Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ*. He is here exhorting against sin, and in favor of virtue and holiness, and he points out the only effectual method of sanctification. Another passage (Gal. iii. 27), declares a *fact*. "As many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ." Here, then, is the wedding

garment which God provides and commands us to assume. In the deepest sense of the word, a sense which agrees well with the parable, *Christ* must be the *habit* in which we are arrayed.

The Galatian Christians at their baptism had renounced sin, made a solemn profession of faith in Christ, and promised to make Him their example of living. God, on his part, had pardoned their past offences, and given them the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Christ, into whose name they were baptized. To put on the wedding garment, then, is sincerely, intelligently, and in dependence on God's strength, to enter into these engagements, to receive the Holy Ghost; and with a humble sense of our helplessness, to take Christ as our infallible Teacher, our atoning Priest, our perfect Example. Christ is the wedding garment, and faith the hand which lays hold of it and puts it on. Clothed with this garment, we are pleasing in the sight of God; our sins renounced are not remembered; our native deficiencies are covered; and the righteousness which was at first appropriated by faith, becomes, by the Spirit's grace, the principle which chiefly actuates and has dominion, and thus ever more actually our own. Clothed in this garment at death we shall "sit down in the kingdom of God." Clothed in this garment at the Day of Judgment, when "the king comes in to see the guests," we shall be welcomed to the Marriage-supper.

The guest in the parable who had not on the wedding garment, seems to represent such, as, through fear or some other form of selfishness, have *only appeared* to obey the call of the Gospel. They believe in facts, but do not yield to the power of truth. They are strangers to true penitence and to living faith. They are therefore without genuine obedience; for no man truly follows Christ who is not animated by His love and actuated by His spirit. Their position is one of fearful guilt. The tone of the king in the parable seems to suggest that it had been better not to have come at all, than to have come thus, without the robe. "Friend, *how camest thou in hither*, not having a wedding garment?" Can we wonder at

the wrath of the king, and the doom of the unworthy guest?

It is not for us to pronounce who has on this garment and who has not. Let us wait until the king comes in to see the guests. He knows His own robes. Instead, then, of judging others, let us make sure that we have a wedding garment ourselves.

But, although the number of the "chosen" is known to none but God, He knows it well. None can escape His scrutiny, or hope to receive indulgence. There is *only one*, in the parable, who has not the garment; but he cannot pass in the crowd. He is singled out. He stands speechless, for indeed he is inexcusable; his silence is taken as acknowledgment of guilt; and so, self-condemned, he is deprived of the powers of action and of motion which he has abused, and is cast away, far from the light and joy of the feast, the favor of the king, the company of the guests, into *the outer* darkness, where "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth;" into dreary desolation; bitter and fierce, but unavailing remorse, his past irreparable, his future hopeless.

God preserve us from such a doom! And may we incline to use the means which He has given us to preserve ourselves from it! While we show energy in our lawful callings, let us not be diverted from our chief good. We were born for eternal life, which is friendship with God. Have we "put on Christ" indeed, or were our vows made in thoughtless carelessness? If we ever received the Spirit, have we not "grieved" Him, and caused Him to depart? If the Divine robe does not evidently cover us, let us lose no time in assuming it. Deeply sensible of our need and our unworthiness, let us, by the most inward and personal, and the strongest act of our spirit, appropriate Christ as our Teacher, our Atonement, and our Example. Let that act be ever repeated. Thus we shall "judge ourselves that we be not condemned of the Lord;" conscience will anticipate the scrutiny of Omniscience, and when that awful, fast approaching moment arrives at last, and we must render an account, our failing spirit will be sustained and comforted by the

thought that we are going forth, not naked nor into unknown darkness, but clad in the best robe, the only robe that can cover us, to our Father's house. And when "the king comes in to see the guests," we shall "have boldness in the Day of Judgment."

The Preacher's Finger-Post.

CHRIST A PRIEST AFTER THE SIMILITUDE OF MELCHISEDEC.

"For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."—Heb. vii. 17.

THE apostle is arguing the superiority of Christ's priesthood over the Aaronic. His argument is this, that Christ's priesthood was after the order of Melchisedec, and that the priesthood of Melchisedec was superior to the Jewish. There is great mystery hanging around the life of this Melchisedec. The opinions of expositors on the subject have been diverse, conflicting, and often highly absurd. Some regard him as being the Holy Ghost; some, as a supernatural emanation from God, and a model after which Christ was formed; some, as an angelic personage who assumed the form of a man; some, as a man formed before the creation of the world, made of spiritual, and not of material, substances;

some think he was Enoch, sent again to live on the earth after the flood; some, that he was Job; some, that he was Shem; and some, that he was the Son of God Himself.* To canvass the merits of these opinions, we leave to those who use the Bible rather as a speculative than a regulative book. It seems obvious to us, from the history in Genesis xiv., that he was a *man*, and from the language of the text, that he was not the man Christ.† As Christ's priesthood is here said to be after the order of Melchisedec, it is necessary to enquire into the peculiarities of his priesthood.

I. THE PRIESTHOOD OF MELCHISEDEC COMBINED WITH IT REGAL AUTHORITY. He was "King of Salem," the old Jerusalem; he wore the

* See Stuart, *in loco*, 550.

† See "Homilist," New Series, vol. i., p. 80.

crown as well as the mitre ; wielded the sceptre as well as the censer ; sat on a throne as well as officiated at an altar. The Jewish priests had no civil authority. In this he resembled Christ, who is king as well as priest. He is Head over all things to the Church ; " He is exalted to be a prince and a Saviour," &c. ; His reign is universal. There are two facts connected with the reign of Melchisedec that will apply to that of Christ. First : *Righteousness*. He is called " King of Righteousness." He was no oppressor ; He did not substitute might for right. Right was the basis of His throne, the jewel of His crown, and the power of His sceptre. The reign of Christ is the reign of right. The other fact connected with the reign of Melchisedec which applies to Christ, is—Secondly : *Peace*. " King of Salem, King of Peace." Melchisedec delighted not in commotion, bloodshed, and war. His reign was peace as well as righteousness, and these two are ever associated. There is no peace in any empire where there is not righteousness. Men will ever rebel against the power that infringes their rights. The reign of Christ is the reign

of peace. He is the Prince of Peace.

II. THE PRIESTHOOD OF MELCHISEDEC WAS FOR MANKIND RATHER THAN FOR A CLASS. The Aaronic priesthood was for the Jew, that of Melchisedec was for *man*. He went out to bless Abraham and the men who helped him on to victory in the struggle he had with the great kings. Melchisedec administered to them the elements of refreshment. " And Melchisedec King of Salem brought forth bread and wine ; and he was the priest of the most high God." Gen. xiv. 18. Christ's priesthood is for the world ; not for a tribe, a class, or a country. " He is a propitiation not for our sins only."

III. THE PRIESTHOOD OF MELCHISEDEC WAS MORALLY INFLUENTIAL. It touched the heart of Abraham, so that even the " patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils." His magnanimous kindness touched the heart of the patriarch with that gratitude which found an expression in his gift. This voluntary tithing in religion is seemly and right. This is the influence that Christ exerts. He so touches the hearts of His disciples with His wonderful kindness, that

they are ready to consecrate all to His service. Observe—First : *That Christ's priestly blessings wherever truly received, will awaken gratitude.* Secondly : *That gratitude awakened, will prompt generous contributions.* Thirdly : *That such contributions are the only legitimate secular instrumentality for promoting the Gospel.*

IV. THE PRIESTHOOD OF MELCHISEDEC HAD NO HUMAN ANCESTRY. He “was without father, and without mother.” This must be taken either literally, historically, or officially. We accept the last idea. The Jewish priesthood had a genealogy. The lineage was traceable from son to sire up to Aaron. He derived his priesthood from no human authority ; he was priest of the most high God. So of the priesthood of Christ ; it had no human ancestry. It is “after the power of an endless life.”

V. THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST REMAINS FOR EVER WITHOUT A SUCCESSOR. “Having neither beginning of days nor end of life.” When Melchisedec passed away, no one stepped into his place. He occupied a position that no one did before him, and that no one did after him. It

is so with the priesthood of Christ. It is not to pass from hand to hand. It will never have a successor. Christ abideth a priest continually. “He ever liveth to make intercession for us.” His priesthood is to continue for ever. The priesthood of Aaron is no more ; the Levitical system is obsolete. Melchisedec has come and gone. He rose from the depths of mystery, shone like a bright star for a time in the firmament of our world's history, and then went down into the depths of mystery again, a man officially without ancestry and without issue. But Christ continueth for ever, and hath an unchangeable priesthood.

A NEGATIVE CRIME AND A POSITIVE PUNISHMENT.

“If any man love* not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha.”—1 Cor. xvi. 22.

THIS solemn expression may be looked upon in three aspects. (1) As a grand characteristic of Biblical appeal. It appeals to the heart. Some books appeal to the intellect, some to the passions, some to the imagination ;—the Bible mainly to the heart. It seeks the reformation of the world

*The verb is not ἀγαπᾶν, but φιλεῖν.

by the reformation of the individual, and the reformation of the individual by the reformation of the heart. (2) As an incidental argument of the Godhead of Christ. The Bible claims for Him supreme love, but supreme affection belongs to God. Paul makes our destiny depend upon love to Christ. Would he make our destiny depend upon mere love to man, to Abraham, David, Isaiah, or John? (3) As a solemn test of a true character. The essence of a true character consists not in ideas or mere actions, but in love, and in love for Christ. "Lovest thou me?" said Christ, to Peter. The text contains two things:—A negative crime, and a positive punishment.

I. A NEGATIVE CRIME. We make three remarks on this state of mind in relation to Christ. First: *It is unreasonable.* There is everything in Him to call out the highest love. There are three kinds of love of which we are susceptible — *gratitude, esteem, and benevolence.* The first requires manifestation of *kindness*; the second, of *moral excellence*; the third, a *purpose for the common good.* Christ manifests all these, and therefore deserves our highest love. There

may be men who have power to excite in our natures, in some degree, love in some of these forms; but Christ alone has power to excite *all* in the *highest* degree. Secondly: *It is ascertainable.* We can soon ascertain whether we love Christ or not. There are infallible criteria. For example, the chief object of love will always be the *most engrossing subject of thought, the attractive theme of conversation, the source of the greatest delight in pleasing, the most transforming power of character, and the most identified with our conscious life.* Thirdly: *It is deplorable.* This love is the only true regulative power of the soul. Where this is not, where this supreme affection is mis-directed, all the powers of our nature are mis-employed, and all is confusion. (*Robertson's Illustration of the Steam Engine.*) Then, indeed, the life of the soul is dead to virtue and to happiness. It will be easy to show that our happiness consists in supreme affection, and that our supreme affection, to yield happiness, must be directed to an object *absolutely perfect, reciprocative, and ever enduring.* Such an object is Christ, and such only is He. The text contains—

II. A POSITIVE PUNISH-

MENT. "Let him be Anathema, Maran-atha." These words intimate two things concerning the punishment. First : *Its nature*. "Let him be Anathema." The word primarily means anything that is laid up, or set apart for some particular* purpose. Its secondary and general meaning is "accursed," devoted to ruin. Paul uses the word in two other places. "But though we, or an angel from heaven," &c. ; (Gal. i. 7, 8) the meaning of which seems to be, "Let him be accounted execrable and accursed who preaches any other Gospel." The other place in which the word occurs, is in Rom. ix. 3. "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ," &c. Here it expresses some terrible amount of suffering. It is one of Paul's strong words to express a terrible evil. Excommunication from all that is pure, and good, and happy, is undoubtedly involved in the word. Eternal banishment from the kingdom of blessedness. This is hell, &c. "Cut off." Cut off the planet from the sun, and it rushes to ruin ; the river from the

fountain, and it is gone ; the branch from the tree, and the limb from the body, and they die. The soul, cut off from Christ—its centre, fountain, root, life—is utterly destroyed. Secondly : *Its certainty*. "Maran-atha," a Syriac word which means "the Lord will come." This word is probably introduced by the apostle in order to convey the certainty of the destruction of those who love not the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ will come to execute judgment upon those who love Him not. This is truly a solemn passage, and written in a solemn spirit. Paul had written the other part of his letter by an amanuensis, but to write these terrible words he takes up the pen himself. "The salutation of me, Paul, with mine own hand." He felt the utmost recoil of heart for those who love not the Lord Jesus Christ, and had the most overwhelming idea of the misery to which such will be exposed. Brother, it is a terrible thought that "souls may be damned for a negation." Men are accursed, not merely because they hate Christ, rebel against His authority, and profane His ordinances, but because they *do not* love Him. Whatever else they do in philanthropy

* See Dean Trench's Synonyms, First Series, but compare the reading of Lachmann and Tischendorf, in Luke xxv. 5.

and religion, if they do not love Him they are Anathema.

THE TEMPLE OF GOODNESS.

"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house."—1. Pet. ii. 5.

THE Church is here compared to a temple. It differs, however, from the temple of Jerusalem in three respects. (1) It has a living foundation. "A living stone," (ver. 4). (2) It is formed of living materials. "Ye also, as lively (*living*) stones." (3) It is essentially spiritual. "A spiritual house." It is built of spiritual materials, and for spiritual purposes. Looking at the Church, under the figure of a temple, we have three ideas.

I. THAT IT IS FORMED ACCORDING TO THE DIVINE PLAN. The temple was built according to the Divine plan. All its forms and sections were Divinely sketched. So with the Church; all are brought together according to Divine plan.

II. THAT THERE IS A NECESSARY UNITY EXISTING BETWEEN ALL ITS PARTS. Timber and stone, from roof to foundation, all are worked to-

gether into a complete whole. The Church of God is one.

III. THAT IT IS THE RESIDENCE OF JEHOVAH. The temple was the scene where Jehovah dwelt; it was His throne, His rest, &c. The Church is the temple for the Holy Ghost to dwell in.

THE PRIESTHOOD OF GOODNESS.

"An holy priesthood."—1 Pet. ii. 5.

OBSERVE:—

I. THE PERSONS OF WHOM THIS PRIESTHOOD IS COMPOSED. It is not composed merely of an official class, but of the good of every sect and clime. All who form a Church. The term priest is never applied in the New Testament to ministers as such, but always to Christians. The good are priests in two respects—First: *Entire consecration to the service of God.* Secondly: *Right of access into the presence of God.* Observe:—

II. THE CHARACTER BY WHICH THIS PRIESTHOOD IS DISTINGUISHED. "A holy priesthood." Holiness is a very comprehensive term. It involves at least three things. (1) Virtue. The right discharge of the duty we owe ourselves. (2) Morality. The

right discharge of the duty we owe to society. (3) Piety. The right discharge of our duty towards God.

III. THE FUNCTION TO WHICH THIS PRIESTHOOD IS CONSECRATED. To offer sacrifices. The sacrifices are essentially spiritual in their nature. *Personal dedication* is a sacrifice. "I beseech you by the mercies of God," &c. *Prayer* is a sacrifice. "Let my prayer be set before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice." *Praise* is sacrifice. "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me." "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit," &c. (Ps. li.) The sacrifices are—First: "Acceptable to God." Secondly: "They are acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." Brothers, let us realize our priesthood. The Aaronic priesthood in all its grandeur was but a dim type of ours. Let us regard ourselves as consecrated to heaven, and let us stand aloof from every unclean thing. Let us remember that we are at once the temple, the sacrifice, and the priest. Let us walk this earth as the old Hebrew hierarch walked the temple, regarding every object as sacred, and with a deep sense of the Divine eye resting upon the spirit.

MORAL FAINTNESS.

"If thou faint in the day of adversity thy strength is small."—Proverbs xxiv. 10.

I. LIFE HAS ITS DAY OF ADVERSITY. In the Scriptures we read of "a day of trouble," "a day of affliction," "a day of desperate sorrow." First: The day of *personal affliction* is a day of adversity. We inherit a frame in which are imbedded the seeds of disease and pain. These must grow sometime or other, and send their thorny branches through the tender nerves of our system. Second: The day of *secular misfortune* is a day of adversity. Sometimes our secular plans are frustrated, our cherished enterprises destroyed, the wheel of fortune seems to turn against us, and the labour of years destroyed. The dishonesty of traders, the fluctuations of the market, a terrible casualty, often strip the wealthiest of his wealth, and leave him a pauper. Third: The day of *social bereavement* is a day of adversity. There are two kinds of bereavement, both of which pierce the heart and cover the soul with gloom. There is the bereavement by *death*. When the last enemy invades the circle of our dearest friendships, and with his ruthless hand tears from us the

dearest object of our hearts, it is "a day of adversity." There is a bereavement by *deception*. When those who have won our affection prove worthless and faithless, the distress of bereavement is often more painful than that of death. Such bereavements, in a hollow and corrupt world, are even more common, and sometimes more painful, than death itself. Fourth: The day of *national distress* is a day of adversity—famine, pestilence, and war. These curses often befall peoples, and strike agony into the heart of the community.

II. THE DAY OF ADVERSITY HAS A TENDENCY TO INDUCE MORAL FAINTNESS. "If thou faint in the day of adversity." Jacob felt this—"All these things are against me," &c. Job felt this—"Let the day perish wherein I was born." (iii. 7.) David felt this—"Why art thou cast down, oh my soul," &c. First: It has a tendency to weaken our *trust in heaven*. Under severe trials the soul is often urged to ask the question—"Can there be a God?" If so, is He conversant with the sufferings of His creatures, and with my individual trials? and if so, where is His justice, not to say His goodness, in allowing me to suffer thus? Second:

It has a tendency to weaken our *interest in men*. The trials which come upon us, from the falsehood, the selfishness, the cupidity, the ingratitude, the injustice, and the tyranny, of men, tend to destroy all genial sympathies with our kind, and to make us misanthropic. Third: It has a tendency to weaken our *purposes in duty*. Thus the day of adversity acted with Elijah, who retired to the cave; and with Jeremiah, who said, "I will speak no more in thy name." Trials often drive the soul into despondency, and the soul in despondency sinks into inaction, and becomes purposeless.

III. MORAL FAINTNESS ARISES FROM THE LACK OF STRENGTH. "If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small." What is the moral strength of the soul? Not the force of its intellectual faculties, nor the opulent stores of its information—but its faith, its hope, its charity. These three are the moral might of the soul. First: *Faith is soul-strength*. Faith, not in mere propositions concerning God, His Christ, and the universe—but in Himself and His blessed Son. Such faith will bear the soul up under its trials. "Who is among you," saith Isaiah, "that feareth

the Lord?" (Is. l. 10.) "Let not your heart be troubled," said Christ. (John xiv. 1.) "I had fainted," said David, "unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." Fainting under trial, therefore, arises from a want of this strength of faith. Secondly: *Hope is soul-strength*. What strength there is in hope! It is the "anchor of the soul." When strong, it can hold a spirit calm amidst the wildest surges of ocean, and the fiercest blast of storm. When the soul faints under trial, therefore, it indicates the weakness of hope. Thirdly: *Love is soul-strength*. Charity—love—never faileth—it endureth all things. What will the soul not do or endure for him or her whom he deeply loves? Many waters cannot quench it, neither can the floods drown it. Catalogue Paul's self-sacrificing labors, tremendous perils, and terrible afflictions, and ask what stimulated him in the path that led to all, and bore him up through all the trials of his life. Here is the answer. "The love of Christ constraineth me," &c. Brother, obvious is at once thy interest and thy duty. Cultivate moral strength, the strength of faith, and hope, and love. Wait in humble

and constant service upon Him who is the fountain of all moral strength; "for they that wait upon the Lord," &c.

TEMPTATION AND HOW TO OVERCOME IT.

"But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."—Matt. iv. 4.

I. TEMPTATION. We must all expect it; shall all have it. There are times when we are particularly susceptible. First: *Times of quickening are often followed by temptation*. It was so with Abraham. After sweet communion at Beersheba, he was tempted to offer up his son. David's depressions frequently came after his spiritual illuminations. Peter's sad fall happened immediately after his free intercourse with Christ, at the supper-table; and Christ was taken into the wilderness after the Spirit had rested on Him at Jordan, and the convincing testimony given that he was indeed the Son of God. There are many thoughts suggested by this. Perhaps it is so to prevent spiritual pride; to test our solidity; to make us solid. High walls must have good foundations; the wide outstretching tree, a firm gripe

in the earth ; it is love that shows us we are still in danger. Secondly : *Times of depression are frequently times of temptation* ; may arise from sickness, losses, trouble in any form ; the attention is called off the proper guard ; we expose ourselves to the foe ; and, ever watchful, he hits us with a malignant glee when the opportunity occurs. If he be watchful, let us meet him in a corresponding spirit. Thirdly : *Times of idleness*. The Christian never should be idle. We have not to do with what should be, but rather with what is. We believe that more have fallen into sin by idleness than have been injured by industry. This will hold good in the Christian and moral worlds. Let us charge our memory. When did we fall ? when bite the dust ? when did our garments trail the earth ? when had insinuation the greatest power over us, &c. ? Was it when our hands were full of labor, and the heart engaged for Christ ? Was it not rather when our want of occupation invited the foe ? Men do not concoct their schemes of darkness in their hours of employment. It is the idle man that is society's enemy ; employment is a good preventive against evil. We do not believe David would have fallen

had he been pre-occupied. Elijah's despondency was after he had finished his work at Carmel. Work is good every way—as an expression of love to Christ, and in what it saves us from. Fourthly : *Scenes of prosperity*. So Solomon felt ; and, alas, what a host of others have to be added to him !

II. TEMPTATION OVERCOME.

There is nothing like example, living, powerful example, to encourage men in any difficult exercise. We are much better pleased at seeing how Christ overcame, than we should have been to have heard from His lips how we were to do it. We see Him before and after the battle, and can almost hear the clanging of the arms, and see the sword driven to its hilt into the body of the foe. That Christ's mode of warfare might not seem peculiar, He endured three kinds of temptation, and the three which include almost every spring of evil that can fall on us. First : *To doubt Providence*. Secondly : *To presumption*. Thirdly : *Idolatry*. And what was the weapon used for all ? The written Word of God. Besides showing us our armory, we regard Christ's appeal to the Word as—*conferring honor*

on the *Scriptures*. Christ certainly had power to resist any temptation apart from extraneous aid. He was in this act a *legislator*. He knew that His words would find an echo to the last day of time, and that He was thereby teaching the unborn Church of after ages how to act under corresponding circumstances. Christ appeals to the written Word, and that threefold appeal says—Honor it; be acquainted with it; for therein help shall be found. We have heard much against the plenary inspiration of the Pentateuch lately. Would Christ have pointed to it if it had been a tissue of falsehoods, or in any way calcu-

lated to mislead? This can never be. Christ has set the seal of His approbation by drawing His weapons of resistance therefrom. The *Scriptures* afford a sufficient power to resist all temptation. Are we in trouble? read Ps. xli. 1. Poverty? Isa. xli. 17, 18. Does our strength fail? Isa. xli. 10. It matters not what may be the need, there is something written to meet it. See the necessity of an intimate acquaintance with the *Scriptures*. But as you may starve even in the land of Goshen, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest, what has been written.

SNELL.

The Pulpit and its Handmaids.

TACT AND TALENT COMPARED.

Talent is something, but tact is everything. Talent is serious, sober, grave, and respectable; tact is all that, and more too. It is not a seventh sense, but is the life of all the five. It is the open eye, the quick ear, the judging taste, the keen smell, and the lively touch; it is the interpreter of all riddles—the surmounter of all difficulties—the remover of all obstacles. It is useful to society in all places, and at all times; it is useful in solitude, for it shows a man his way into the world; it is useful in society, for it shows him his way through

the world. Talent is power—tact is skill: talent is weight—tact is momentum: talent knows what to do—tact knows how to do it: talent makes a man respectable—tact will render him respected: talent is wealth—tact is ready money. For all the practical purposes of life, tact carries it against talent ten to one. Take them to the theatre, and put them against each other on the stage, and talent shall produce you a tragedy that will scarcely live long enough to be condemned, while tact keeps the house in a roar, night after night, with its successful farces. There is no want of dramatic talent,

there is no want of dramatic tact, but they are seldom together; so we have successful pieces which are not respectable, and respectable pieces which are not successful. Take them to the bar, and let them shake their learned curls at each other in legal rivalry: talent sees its way clearly, but tact is first at its journey's end. Talent has many a compliment from the bench, but tact touches fees from attorneys and clients. Talent speaks learnedly and logically—tact triumphantly. Talent makes the world wonder that it gets on no faster, tact excites astonishment that it gets on so fast; and the secret is, that it has no weight to carry; it makes no false steps, it hits the right nail on the head—it loses no time—it takes all hints—and by keeping its eye on the weathercock, is ready to take advantage of every wind that blows. Take them into the church. Talent has always something worth hearing, tact is always sure of abundance of hearers. Talent may obtain a living, tact will make one. Talent gets a good name, tact a great one. Talent convinces, tact converts. Talent is an honour to the profession, tact gains honour from the profession. Take them to court. Talent feels its weight, tact finds its way. Talent commands, tact is obeyed. Talent is honoured with approbation, and tact is blessed by preferment. Place them in the senate. Talent has the ear of the house, but tact wins its heart and has its votes. Talent is fit for employment, but tact is fitted for it. It has a knack of slipping into place with a sweet silence and glibness of movement, as a billiard ball insinuates itself into the pocket. It seems to know everything without learning anything. It has served an invisible and extemporary apprenticeship.

It wants no drilling: it never ranks in the awkward squad. It has no left hand, no deaf ear, no blind side. It puts on no looks of wondrous wisdom, it has no air of profundity; but plays with the details of place as dexterously as a well-taught hand flourishes over the keys of the pianoforte. It has all the air of common-place, and all the force and power of genius. It can change sides with a *key*, *presto* movement, and be at all points of the compass, while talent is ponderously and learnedly shifting a single point. Tact calculates clearly, reasons logically, makes out a case as clear as daylight, and utters its oracles with all the weight of justice and reason. Tact refutes without contradicting, puzzles the profound without profundity, and without wit outwits the wise. Set them together on a race of popularity, pen in hand, and tact will distance talent by half the course. Talent brings to market that which is wished for. Talent instructs, talent enlightens. Talent leads where no one follows, tact follows where the humour leads. Talent is pleased that it ought to have succeeded; tact is delighted that it has succeeded. Talent toils for a posterity which will never repay it; tact throws away no pains, but catches the passion of the passing hour. Talent builds for eternity; tact on a short lease, and gets good interest. Talent is certainly a very fine thing to talk about, a very good thing to be proud of, a very glorious eminence to look down from; but tact is useful, portable, applicable, always alive, always alert, always marketable; it is the talent of talents, the availableness of resources, the applicability of power, the eye of discrimination, the right hand of intellect.

SCARGILL.

Theological Notes and Queries.

OPEN COUNCIL.

[The utmost freedom of honest thought is permitted in this department. The reader must therefore use his own discriminating faculties, and the Editor must be allowed to claim freedom from responsibility.]

Queries to be Answered.

6.—What is the *power* which a woman ought to have on her head *because of the angels*, 1 Cor. xi. 10?

—J. C.

7.—Who were Cleopas, Luke xxiv. 18; Cleophas, John xix. 25; and Alphæus, Matt. x. 3?—F. L.

8.—Does prophecy necessarily imply prediction?—G. H.

9.—What is the meaning of “redemption” in 1 Cor. i. 30, and why is it put last?—T. W. R.

10.—Did demoniacal possession imply bad moral character? if not, why is the nameless woman in

Luke vii. 37, and all fallen women called Magdalenes, to the grievous dishonor of the devoted and distinguished Mary of Magdalen?—

H. T. M.

11.—Are Christian ministers *priests*?—F. G.

12.—Are we to understand in Gen. iii., ver. 22, that it was possible for man to partake of the tree of life and eat and live for ever? or what is the meaning?—R. W.

13.—What is the meaning of the word *regeneration* in Scripture? Is it the same as *renewal*?—T. D.

Literary Notices.

[We hold it to be the duty of an Editor either to give an early notice of the books sent to him for remark, or to return them at once to the Publisher. It is unjust to praise worthless books; it is robbery to retain unnoticed ones.]

THE REVIEWER'S CANON.

In every work regard the author's end,
Since none can compass more than they intend.

SYNONYMS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT; Part the Second. By RICHARD CHEVREUX TRENCH, D.D., Dean of Westminster, and of the Order of the Bath. Cambridge: Macmillan and Co. London: John W. Parker, Son, and Bourn.

Every student knows that the English New Testament is not an exact representation of the Greek. This is partly to be attributed to the intention, to us a mistaken one, and the oversight of the translators, and partly to the differences of the languages. Sometimes one and the same Greek word is represented by two English ones; as in 1 Peter ii. 4, “To whom coming, as to a living stone, *ἡθὺς ζῶντα*. . . . ye also as *lively*

(living) stones, *λίθοι ζῶντες* ;” where, by an unaccountable variation of rendering, the point of the passage is lost. Sometimes, different Greek words are represented by one English word, of which numerous instances may be collected from this and from the former volume of synonyms. If the translators had, with scrupulous care, preserved everywhere as precise a correspondence as possible between the translation and the original, unalterably assigning the same English to the same Greek word, except in cases where there is an obvious and wide divergence of meaning—even then, in consequence of the difference of the Greek and the English vocabularies, the correspondence would not have been perfect. A perfect correspondence is a simple impossibility. Whoever, therefore, would fully appreciate the diction of the early documents of Christianity, must study them with care in the original. *Non omnia possumus omnes*. Few have had the best opportunities for cultivating this kind of study. Even those who have, have not always improved it. Those who, like Dean Trench, have both had the opportunity and expended the labor, are debtors to their less favored or more slothful brethren. The Dean is *wordy* in the honorable sense. He has not only wrought at the New Testament itself, with Concordance at his side, but has a sense, which could only have come of ripe scholarship, of delicate shades of meaning. He has evidently for years been an extensive reader, and has availed himself largely of the aid of Greek and Latin Fathers, and of mediæval and modern commentators of every communion, from the Jesuit Maldonatus to Matthew Poole the Nonconformist. The Dean's two volumes are to the student of the Scriptures worth their weight in gold.

We proceed to give a few specimens, in a very abridged form, from the Second Part:—*ἀγροῦματος* and *ἰδιώτης*. Acts iv. 13. English version, *unlearned* and *ignorant* ; *ἀγράμματος* is simply *illiterate*. The primary idea of *ἰδιώτης* is that of the private man, occupying himself with τὰ ἴδια, as contrasted with the political. But as according to the Greek notion, public life is the true education of the man and the citizen, *ἰδιώτης* became a term of contempt. The *ἰδιώτης* was unexercised in business, unpractical, boorish. Sometimes he is the unskilled man as set over against the artificer ; he is unprofessional. Subjects are *ἰδιῶται* as contrasted with their prince, underlings as contrasted with their masters. The private or lay-Israelite was so as contrasted with the priest. The *ἰδιῶται* of 1 Cor. xiv. 16, 23, 24, are plain believers, with no special spiritual gifts ; elsewhere they are the lay-members of the Church as distinguished from those who minister in the Word and Sacraments. When the Pharisees recognised Peter and James as *ἀγράμματοι καὶ ἰδιῶται*, in the first word they expressed more the absence in them of book-learning, especially of acquaintance with the Scriptures and with traditional lore ; in the second, the absence

of that education which men acquire by mingling with persons of influence, and by transacting important affairs.

ἁμαρτία, uncertain in etymology, is a failing of the true end and scope of our lives, which is God. It is sin in the abstract as well as the concrete, or the act of sinning, no less than the sin sinned; while *ἁμάρτημα* is a deed of disobedience. *παράκοή* is strictly a failing to hear, or a hearing amiss—the consequent active disobedience being implied. It is in Rom. v. 19 (where only it occurs) opposed to *ὑπακοή*. Although *ἄνομος* once, at least, means a person without law, to whom a law has not been given, (1 Cor. ix. 21) yet *ἀνομία* is always the condition or deed of one who acts contrary to law. So, of course, *παράνομία*. Where there is no law, there may be *ἁμαρτία*, *ἀδικία*, but not *ἀνομία*. *παράβασις*, passing over a line, trespass, is explicit disobedience. *παράπτωμα*, a fall beside, signifies that in respect of which a man falls and lies prostrate, unable to stand before God. Sometimes it is used in a mitigated sense, Gal. vi. 1; but sometimes much more weightily, as at Eph. ii. 1. So of the verb. *ἄγνῳμα*, involuntary error, occurs only once in the New Testament, Heb. ix. 7. This word regards sin in the mildest possible light. Compare “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,” and “I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly, in unbelief.” No sin of man, except, perhaps, the sin against the Holy Ghost, which is irremissible, is committed with a full recognition of the evil which is chosen, the good which is abandoned. Sin is always more or less an *ἄγνῳμα*, and the more the *ἄγνοεῖν* predominates, the greater the extenuation of the sin. *ἡττημα*, diminution, degradation; Rom. xi. 12, 1 Cor. vi. 7. *πλημμελία*, singing out of tune, is often found in the Septuagint, but never in the New Testament. It is sin regarded as discord or disharmony, according to Milton:—

“Disproportioned sin
Jarred against nature’s chime, and with harsh din
Broke the fair music that all creatures made
To their great Lord.”

Τέρας, σημεῖον, ὄντισμα, ἔνδοξον, παράδοξον, θαυμάσιον. *τερας*, a note-worthy event, a prodigy. The works of Jesus are never called *τέρατα* except in connexion with some other name. They are also *σημεῖα*, signs of God’s presence and operation. They are *ὀνυμεία*, as out-comings of God’s power; *μεγαλεῖα*, as out-comings of His greatness; *ἔνδοξα*, as works in which shines glory; *παράδοξα*, strange things; and *θαυμάσια*, wonderful.

ζῶον, a living being; *θηρίον*, a beast. Even God is *ζῶον ἀθάνατον*, having life in Himself. In the New Testament more fitly and reverently is He called *ζωή*. Man is *λογικὸν καὶ πολιτικὸν ζῶον*, as Plutarch

grandly says. *θηρίον*, *θηρ*, Aeol. *φήρ*, Latin, *fera*, German, *thier*, English, *deer*. The brutal, bestial element is prominent in the word. It is much to be regretted that both these words have been rendered by the same in the English version of the Apocalypse. The symbols are utterly distinct. The ζῶα, iv. 6, representing creaturely life, form part of the *heavenly* symbolism; the *θηρία* belong to the opposite class.

μορφή is *form*, *σχῆμα* *fashion*, *ιδέα* *appearance*. *μορφή* is not equivalent to *οὐσία*, yet none but God could be ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ. (Phil. ii.) The verity of the Incarnation is expressed in *μορφὴν δούλου λαβών*; the outward facts which fell under the observation of men by *σχῆματι εὐρεθεὶς* κ.τ.λ. As Bengel puts it, *habitus, cultus, restitus, rictus, gestus, sermones et actiones*. (Rom. xii. 2.) *μὴ συσχηματίζεσθε*, be not co-fashioned with this age, but *μεταμορφοῦσθε*, be transformed, a deep and abiding change. At the resurrection, Christ *μετασχηματίσει* the bodies of His saints. Phil. iii. 21. Not a *substantial*, but an *accidental* change, a change not in respect of *quiddity*, but of *qualities*. The *σχῆμα τοῦ κόσμου* passes away, but the *κόσμος* itself abides. There is no *τέλος τοῦ κόσμου*, but only *τοῦ αἰῶνος*. *ιδέα* occurs only once in the New Testament (Matt. xxviii. 3), better there rendered *appearance* than *countenance*.

Dean Trench has laid the students of the New Testament under such obligations, that they are bound for grateful as well as selfish reasons to hope that his serviceable life may be lengthened, and that he may for many years be enabled to indicate, as Bengel puts it, "from the native force of the words, the simplicity, profundity, harmony, and wholesomeness of the heavenly meanings."

THE CHORALE BOOK FOR ENGLAND; the Hymns from the German, by CATHERINE WINKWORTH; the Tunes edited by Professor WILLIAM STERNDAL BENNETT, and OTTO GOLDSCHMIDT. London: Longman & Co.

PHYSICIANS tell us that in almost all cases, a stage of prostration is sure to be followed by one of reaction, and thus, even at the point of death, bright moments will occur, which afford opportunities for endeavors to resuscitate, if not to bring again the sufferer to health: a parallel case to this may be traced in the history of Church Music during the last few years. The book before us is one of the most striking signs of restoration.

The result of two inquiries will show this: first, how far its musical portion fulfils the requirements of the House of God; and, secondly, how far its poetry answers the same end.

In reply to the first question the answer is short, and on all points affirmative. Indeed, the names of its compilers are in themselves a guarantee for this; for to few hands could the restoration of these

beautiful compositions have been so well entrusted. To Mr. Goldschmidt, as a German musician of the highest order, they must be the familiar friends of his earliest education, and hence their sound and untouched condition would be his first study; while Professor Sterndale Bennett's long connection with the Bach Society, as well as his thorough familiarity with music of this class, would render him careful in the extreme to hand them to the world on the one hand unshorn, and on the other unembellished.

In reviewing our early knowledge of these compositions, we may say that it was through the 371 Chorales of Sebastian Bach, alone, that they became at all familiar to English musicians, but it must be borne in mind that the melodies were not his own, many of them in truth dating back for more than a century before his day, and further, that they were chosen by him for harmonization as exercises for his own pupils. Hence, on looking over them, their unfitness for congregational purposes is at once apparent, from their difficult harmonies—many having been treated in several ways—the Chorale “O haupt voll blut,” &c., for example.

But the simple beauty of the whole collection caused many to be appropriated, and, alas! mutilated in melody, particularly, in order to fit them to the somewhat monotonous metres prevalent in our hymn books. Their introduction, however, even under such unfavorable conditions, had a good effect, and the next step was the introduction into more modern books of metres suitable to some of the more common Chorales, although the latter were yet to some extent dressed up for their position. But all praise to the editors of the “Chorale Book for England,” for their laborious task (so well executed) of tracing to their authors the whole collection they have given us, and not less for the careful treatment bestowed on their harmonies, in which latter each part may truly be called a melody in itself, and thus invested with extreme interest for the singer; and while great difficulties (such as occur in Bach's 371) are carefully avoided, the parts are perfectly free and independent. This might, of course, be expected when it is remembered that the editors have compiled from the same sources whence Bach derived his materials, and that they have been careful to restore theirs to their first state and position in all their purity. One or two may be pointed to and compared as examples of this. For instance:—No. 19 corresponds to Bach's 177, “Ach bleib bei uns;” and No. 46 to 165 of the same author, viz., “O Lamm Gottes.” But in both, while the harmonies are all that could be desired, the melodies are rendered simpler, and most expressive of the words. Again we may compare No. 41 with a tune now well known as “Nassau;” and it will at once be seen, especially when taken in union with the quaint metre of its poetry, how much it has suffered in shaping it to 6 lines of 7's as usually found in our own

collections. And, lastly, compare No. 115 "O Gott du frommer," first, with No. 315 of Bach; secondly, with the tune Königsberg in Mr. Mercer's excellent collection; and, thirdly, with Mendelssohn's treatment of it in the Oratorio of "Elijah."

We venture to say that the reader cannot open the book without lighting on matter both musical and poetic, which will completely charm him. Can anything be more touching than the words of No. 193, "When my last hour is close at hand," or could any melody better express this prayerful hymn? Nor less beautiful are the joyous, yet again prayerful, verses and music of the Morning Hymn, No. 162, "Come, my soul, awake 'tis morning."

Respecting the poetry of the work, it is well known that in Germany, words are always associated with their individual music (one or two exceptions only to this occur in Bach's 371); hence the poetry of this book has been literally translated from the German originals, and Miss Winkworth has rendered many of them as nearly word for word as practicable, yet retaining their peculiar metres. Musical readers of her "*Lyra Germanica*" will now find in the Chorale Book the words in all their German force and simplicity, and breathing the very soul of Christian poetry in union with their own music.

The Congregational Edition is a very neat small volume, containing the melody and the words: it is beautifully got up, and remarkably cheap.

VILLAGE SERMONS. By a Northamptonshire Rector. With a Preface on the Inspiration of Holy Scripture. London and Cambridge: Macmillan & Co.

THIS volume contains twenty-seven discourses, on some of the most vital points in Christian theology. Though delivered to a village congregation, there is nothing in the thinking or the language that would indicate, on the author's part, the consciousness that he had to condescend to the level of inferior souls. The operative classes are not unfrequently grossly insulted by the studied and avowed attempt on the part of some of their preachers and lecturers to be unusually simple in sentiment and speech. We have sometimes witnessed endeavors of this order that have awakened, in their turn, feelings of pity, laughter, and contempt, and where the condescension has not been on the part of the speaker, but of the hearer, in tolerating the twaddle of inanity. Truth—moral and religious truth—is level to the souls of all, and many an operative will out-measure in soul and general culture that of the majority of official talkers. There is scarcely anything common-place in these discourses. For the most part they are as fresh as spring. The author has his own thoughts, which are often strongly suggestive, and his own style, which, because natural, is interesting, intelligible, and some-

times rises to the truly eloquent. The dedication of the volume to the author's father is a gem. Its spirit at the outset unlocks the heart of the reader to receive what the author has to say.

THE POWER OF THE TONGUE; or, CHAPTERS FOR TALKERS. By BENJAMIN SMITH. London: John Mason.

THIS volume is on a subject of undoubted importance, and it is not a little remarkable that amidst the amazing fertility of the English press no work has appeared on this subject before. The work is divided into twelve chapters, the subjects of which are:—The importance of the human voice; the authorized standard of speech; the perfect model of speech; the crimes perpetrated by wicked talkers; blunders committed by careless talkers; blessings conferred by wise talkers; words spoken by those around us; the correct estimate of our own words; elements of power in speaking; the voice, a witness for its Maker; control over the tongue attained; and, incentives to the right use of our lips. If the author has not gone in all cases to the roots of the questions he has discussed, and placed all their subjects in their true philosophical positions, yet he has produced a work of no ordinary merit. Every chapter is rich in variety of thoroughly useful thought; and the apt illustrations with which the work abounds, invest it with a charm that will hold in a delightful spell the attention of the reader throughout.

A PEN-PORTRAIT OF THE REV. JOHN GUTTRIDGE. By the Rev. RICHARD WRENCH. London: William Reed. Though we cannot say that we approve of the plan of pen-picturing *living* ministers, and are far enough from discovering lofty genius in the fluency of ignorance and audacity which the author seems to recognize in the case of one or two of the names mentioned in this pamphlet, we can discern and appreciate the remarkable descriptive ability of the pages. On the whole, too, we approve of his judgment upon the Rev. John Guttridge, a man whom we have the pleasure of knowing, and regard as one of nature's royal sons. THE COMPLETE WORKS OF RICHARD SIBBES, D.D. Vol. V. Edinburgh: James Nicol. The present volume contains the whole of Sibbes's remaining Expositions and Treatises based upon portions of the Epistles of St. Paul. We have already characterized this old author, and his leading excellences and defects show themselves in this volume. We again recommend this edition, and express the hope that the enterprising publisher is encouraged beyond his expectations. THE DIVINE RENEWAL; A Summer Homily. By W. J. COLE, Home Missionary. Bristol: W. MACH. This is a very small tract, soon read, and worth reading. BURDEN BEARING. By G. W. MYLNE. London: William Macintosh. A good Gospel tract, deserving extensive distribution.



A HOMILY

ON

DEMETRIUS;

OR THE

Triumph of the Gospel, an Argument
for the Divinity of its Power.

“Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying, that they be no gods, which are made with hands.”—Acts **xix.** 26.



THE man who uttered these words is described in the twenty-fourth verse. His name was Demetrius; he was a silversmith; he made “silver shrines for Diana, which brought no small gain unto the craftsmen.” It was customary for the heathen to place in their houses models of their gods and temples. Diana was the famed goddess of the Ephesians; she was worshipped as the great mother of mankind, and this Demetrius was professionally engaged in manufacturing silver models of her and her shrines. His business in this occupation was both extensive and lucrative; he employed a number of artisans to execute his orders and to assist him in the work, and thus “he brought no small gain unto these craftsmen.” The preaching of the Gospel by Paul in the city threatened the destruction of the trade. The men won by his ministry to Christ—and they were rapidly increasing—turned away in disgust from Diana, and regarded her statues

and her shrines as execrable abominations. So alarmed was Demetrius at this, that he called his workmen together and addressed them with all the earnestness of a mercantile cupidity. "Sirs," he says, "ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands: so that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth."

The *meeting* in which these words were delivered was a very remarkable one. It gives us an insight into three things:—

First: *The perversion of human handicraft.* Here is an assembly of men whose inventive genius and skilful labor were employed in the manufacturing of things offensive to high Heaven, and debasing to human souls; things to foster in man the superstition which has ever been at once his disgrace and his curse. Alas! this perversion of human handicraft has ever been too common. Much of the industry of the world is employed in fabricating that which is bad in itself—beverages which brutalize the reason; arts which inflame the lusts; and horrid implements of torture and death. So corrupt is the commerce of the world, that men traffic in the bad, and build up fortunes by selling the productions of wickedness.

This meeting gives an insight:—

Secondly: *Into the force of the mercantile spirit.* What was it that brought these men together, and inspired Demetrius the speaker to exert himself to the utmost to arrest the progress of the Truth in Ephesus? Cupidity. "Our craft is in danger to be set at nought." This it was which roused him and his artisans to oppose the Gospel. This fired them with enthusiasm. This mercenary spirit is ever the unceasing antagonist to the truth. Preach the Divine doctrine of human liberty to the slaveholders who traffic in

their species ; preach the Divine doctrine of peace to those who get their living in providing deadly weapons for the field of battle ; preach the doctrine of spiritual independency to men who derive their revenue and influence by arrogating dominion over men's faith ; and in all these cases you will have the mercenary spirit rising and thundering in full tide against you.

This meeting gives us an insight :—

Thirdly : *Into the revolutionary power of the Gospel.* It was the revolution which the Gospel was effecting in Ephesus that roused their fears. “So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed,” that many of the magicians who drove a lucrative trade in their imposture, “brought their books together, and burned them before all men.” Demetrius felt now that the very foundations of idolatry were being sapped by the doctrines of the apostle.

In the text he refers to the triumphs which Paul had already achieved. “Moreover ye see and hear,” &c. Now, we shall regard the triumphs of the Gospel at Ephesus as described by Demetrius, as *an argument for its Divine power.* There were four things connected with its triumph, which, taken together, will amount to an argument of considerable force in favor of the position that it is “*the power of God.*”

I. The triumphs of the Gospel at Ephesus, according to Demetrius, involved a RELIGIOUS REVOLUTION. The mercenary orator alleges that Paul had succeeded in turning away much people, saying, that they “be no gods, which were made with hands.” The revolution effected in the minds of the people was that which involved the abandonment of those objects which had gathered about them the strongest and the profoundest affection of their nature ;—their *gods.*

First : Such a change as this *religious* change is always the most *radical.* The *god of the soul*, whatever it is, is in all cases the object of the soul's supreme affection. It is that which gathers about it and centres in itself, more of the sympathies of human nature than any

other object in existence. This paramount affection is, in sooth, the very font—the root of a man's life. What man loves most, moves and controls him in all the activities of his being; it is at once the engine that propels, and the rudder that guides his bark on the sea of active life. Out of this supreme love, which is, without figure, the moral heart of a man, are the issues of life. Change this in a man, and you change the whole current of the river of his existence; you reverse the action of all the wheels in the machinery of his being. The man, in fact, to use Scripture phraseology, is a new “birth,” a new creation, a “new man.” Such is the *radical* change which the Gospel is designed and fitted to effect. This is its grand mission; where it has not wrought this revolution, whatever else it has accomplished, it has failed of its purpose.

Secondly : Such a change as this religious change, is always the *most difficult*. The strongest attachments in human nature, whenever they are developed, are the religious. Men who *feel* that they have gods, will hold to them with all the tenacity of their being. Where this religious attachment exists, men have ever been ready to give their property, their wives, their children, their very lives for their gods. Religiousness is the soil in which the soul strikes its deepest roots; the grand tree in God's spiritual forest will part sooner far with every leaf and branch, and even bark itself, than with its rootings; it will hold on to these till every fibre quivers in the chilly blast of death. Even the bigoted proselytizer in this age, who seeks to turn men from other sects to his own, be it from synagogue to church, from popery to protestantism, or from conformity to dissent, knows, to the vexation of his narrow soul, the difficulty of effecting the slightest change in men religiously. But the change he aims at is not a thousandth part as difficult as the change the Gospel aims to achieve; the change, not of a man's creed or sect, but the change of his deepest inward life.

There were circumstances, it should be remembered, connected with the age and sphere in which the Gospel was first introduced, which contributed not a little to augment the natural difficulty. The old religions to which the Jew and the heathen

were attached, had a grand history, a gorgeous aspect, and a world-wide popularity, which gave them an immense influence upon their devotees. The Sanhedrim of Jerusalem, and the legions of Rome, stood in terrible antagonism to the man who would dare abandon the old religion, and threatened death to him who would venture to promote such a new and hostile system as the Gospel.

Having thus noticed the radicalness and difficulty of the work involved in the revolution which the Gospel set itself to accomplish, we observe :—

II. The triumphs of the Gospel at Ephesus, according to Demetrius, were UNDENIABLE FACTS. Demetrius says, “Ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands.” He suggests three kinds of evidence :—

First : The evidence of *personal observation*, “Ye see,” &c. The men he addressed had ocular demonstration of the fact. They had seen with their own eyes the change which the Gospel had wrought among the men of Ephesus. They had seen the change which had come over not a few of the men and women in the city, to whom Paul had preached ; how they had renounced their old associations, their old habits, their old ideas, their old religion, and adopted a new course of life. A course which was attractive at once by its strangeness and injurious bearing upon their own craft. They *saw* these changes, there was no denying them. Such ocular evidence of the revolutionary power of the Gospel most men in Christendom are privileged to possess. Who has not known the drunkard, the blasphemer, the licentious, and the selfish, become, by the power of the Gospel, temperate, reverent, chaste, and generous. Thank God, such instances occur now—would they were multiplied a millionfold !

Another kind of evidence suggested by Demetrius, is—

Secondly : The evidence of *general testimony*, “Ye hear.” Some of their own townsmen, perhaps, whom

they were bound to believe, had told of changes effected upon persons within their particular sphere of observation. Such evidence, if the witnesses are intellectually and morally competent, is nearly as conclusive as the former, and is often available in cases where the former is not. Most of our knowledge is derived from this source. What we have *seen* is but as a fraction compared with what we have *heard*. Our personal vision has only given us the area of a few acres, and the range of a few years : general testimony gives us the universe and ages. From such a source we learn much of the brilliant achievements of the Gospel in the days that are gone. "We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old." From the testimony of Paul we are assured that in Colosse, Ephesus, Rome, and Corinth, wonderful religious revolutions had been effected by the Gospel he had preached. His success in Corinth, the most corrupt and dissolute city of the old East, may fairly be taken as a specimen of his achievements elsewhere. After enumerating some of the classes of sinners that dwelt in that metropolis of iniquity, such as "fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners," he says, "such were some of you : but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and in the Spirit of our God." Clement, one of the Church fathers, who died in Rome in the year 102, confirms, in a letter which he wrote thirty years after the church was established at Corinth by Paul, this testimony of the apostle as to the great and radical change effected by his preaching in that city. Others of the Christian fathers furnish abundant testimony of the wonderful changes which the Gospel effected through the whole Roman empire, during the first three centuries of the Christian era.

Another kind of evidence suggested by Demetrius is—

Thirdly: The evidence of *avowed enemies*. Demetrius was an avowed enemy, and yet here he publicly affirms the triumphs of the Gospel. Could he have denied, or even have ignored

its effects, rest assured he would have done so. But so patent and influential were the changes wrought in the city, that he was bound thus publicly to avow them. The wonderful revolutions which Christianity has effected in the character and lives of thousands, in every age, is so manifest and influential, that hostile historians, such as Gibbon, are bound to chronicle them as the fountain of striking epochs. From such evidence, then, as is suggested by Demetrius, and which abounds in this age and land of ours, all are forced to admit the radical changes which Christianity has effected in the conduct and spirit of multitudes of mankind. These triumphs of the Gospel stand forth amidst the flowing events of human history in the eighteen centuries that are gone, with an existence as undeniable, and a brilliancy as marked, as the fixed stars of night amidst the floating clouds, and the passing meteors of our sky.

III. The triumphs of the Gospel, at Ephesus, according to Demetrius, were CONFINED TO NO PARTICULAR TYPE OF MEN. Demetrius affirms that the religious revolutions effected by Paul's preaching were widely spread. "*Not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia.*" Though there might be in this broad statement something of that exaggeration which often marks the utterances of an impassioned speaker, or something of that civic egotism which often deludes a man with the notion that his own little country is the world—we are warranted in accepting it as conveying the idea that the influence was not confined to any particular type of men, natural or social. The Jew and the Gentile, the refined Greek and the brave Roman, the tradesman, the artist, the poet, the sage, the statesman, the warrior—some of all types became the subjects of its renovating power. On the day of Pentecost the representatives, perhaps, of all races became the subjects of the change. By the end of the second century, Tertullian, addressing the Roman magistrates, speaking in the name of the Christians, said, "We are but of yesterday, and we have filled up every place, towns, islands, castles, boroughs,

councils, camps, tribes, wards, palace, senate, forum ; we have left you nothing but your temples." And, in modern times, not a type of men has yet been discovered on whom the Gospel has not effected its religious change. The dreamy Hindoo, the degraded Hottentot, the stalwart sons of Polynesia, the African, the Asiatic, and European races, all have furnished examples of the regenerating power of the Gospel. This fact lends not a little force, we think, to the argument. Had the religious changes which the Gospel effected been confined to any particular type of men, they might have been ascribed rather to the natural peculiarities of the subjects than to the Divine energy of the system. It might have been said that these men experienced its influence because of the deficiency of this faculty, or the predominance of that ; the keenness of this sensibility, or the bluntness of that. But since men of all types are undeniably susceptible of its renovating power, its energy is more manifestly Divine. The Maker of man is the author of the system, since it can work out in him the change which is the grand aim of its mission. The fact is, that man, the world over, and the ages through, needs that which the Gospel alone can supply. He needs an object of supreme love that can satisfy his conscience, and become the happy centre of his soul ; he needs a reconciliation to that Deity whose indignation he feels he has incurred by the wickedness of his life ; he needs the hope of a happy life beyond the grave ; he needs some plan of social unity that shall bind all the opposing sections of the race in the bonds of a loving brotherhood. To all these deep needs of humanity the Gospel appeals by ministering to them that which meets them in every point, and up to their fullest demand. It satisfies the *desire of nations* ; it responds to the cry of the race ; it has "good tidings of great joy" for "all people."

IV. The triumphs of the Gospel at Ephesus, according to Demetrius, were ACHIEVED BY THE AGENCY OF MAN AS MAN. How does Demetrius say that the Gospel worked this

revolution at Ephesus, and throughout all Asia? Here are his words:—"This Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands. "This Paul;" not these angels; not these magistrates backed by victorious legions; but this Paul, a poor Jew, a tent-maker. How did he do it? By wielding civil authority? No. All political power was against him. By miraculous instrumentality? He was, it is true, endowed with this power, but the great moral results of his ministry are not ascribed to miraculous agency. Here is the agency he employs. He *hath persuaded*. He used arguments to convince their understandings, and plied them with motives to influence their will. He brought the light of his own ideas upon their intellect, and the warmth of his own sympathies upon their hearts. His words, as they fell upon their ears, bore with them not only a truth to bring their judgments to his conclusion, but a love to bring their hearts into unison with his own. This is the noblest of works. He who wins one soul to the true and the right, achieves a conquest that throws the most brilliant victories of the Cæsars, Alexanders, and Napoleons into contempt. The suasive energy is truth spoken in love; it is a sword forged in heaven; its victories bless humanity, gladden the universe, and encircle the conqueror with an imperishable renown.

There is much in connexion with the agency of Paul at Ephesus which impresses us with Divine power.

First: *We discover Divine power in his daring to enter such a place as Ephesus.* Ephesus was one of the greatest cities of the ancient world. In the days of Paul it was the capital of Asia. The temple of Diana was the great thing in this great city; it was four hundred and twenty-five feet in length, and two hundred and twenty in breadth; it was encompassed by one hundred and twenty-seven pillars, each sixty feet in height; it was the great attraction; it was to the population the means of livelihood, as well as the scene of their devotions. Foreigners from a distance were constantly pouring into the city in order to worship the

far-famed goddess in her majestic fane. Thus the mercenary united with the superstitious to bind men's hearts to Diana. What valor, more than human, must have enabled Paul to have entered such a city as this to proclaim a doctrine that would strike at once against the worldly interests and the religious predilections of the population! I know of no courage in the history of worldly men approaching that which this Paul displays in carrying his unpopular message into such places as Antioch, Corinth, Athens, Ephesus, Rome, the head-quarters of idolatry, sensualism, and wickedness in all its forms. This heroism of his can only be explained by the fact that the power was of God and not of him.

Secondly : *We discover Divine power in what, by his simple agency, he accomplished there.* Just in proportion to the simplicity of the agency which this man employs, is the manifestness of the Divine power in the wonders that he achieved. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of man." Such agency as that which Paul employed at Ephesus, an agency of suasion, is that by which the Gospel, in every age, has accomplished its grand results. It spreads, not by the sword of the warrior, the enactments of statesmen, or the edicts of monarchs, but by the simple persuasion of its disciples and its messengers ; by their words, and spirit, and conduct and life, they persuade the ungodly world to turn from its idols ; and thus the work goes on. Does not this simple agency, by which the Gospel succeeds, attest its Divinity ? Had it worked out its revolutions by some grandly imposing instrumentality, it might have been concluded that the instrumentality did the work.

Brothers, duly weigh all the circumstances which the words of Demetrius, at Ephesus, suggest in relation to the triumphs of the Gospel, in order to deepen and strengthen your faith in the Almightyness of its power. Mark well the nature of the change it effects. It is *religious*, it is a revolution in the supreme forces of the soul. Other changes, more external and less vital, it has effected on a grand scale in the world's history, and for these we may indeed claim for it a power

nothing less than Divine. Great intellectual, domestic, social, ecclesiastic, and political revolutions it has wrought in human history. It has sapped the foundations of Pagan systems, and they are tottering to the fall. In its brightness the crescent has become dim, it has stripped priestcraft of its mask, and thrown light into the spectral realms of superstition. Systems that once held the world in awe it has exploded. It has stabbed autocracy to the heart, and the death-throes of despotism are everywhere seen. The seeds of liberty it has scattered over the two hemispheres. It has given laws to the ruling empires of the world. The first geniuses of the race have been kindled into splendor with its themes. It has coloured the literature of the world, and tempered the spirit of the age. Its symbol is the chief ornament of Christendom. It is hung in the halls of science, and the palaces of sovereigns. It is interwoven into the thoughts and hearts, into the hopes and fears, into the designs and doings, and general experience, of that race of men who are inevitably destined to become the civil, intellectual, and moral masters of the world.

But these revolutions are but shadows of that *religious* revolution in men's souls of which we have been speaking, and which it is its great aim and glory to accomplish. It is in this deep and inner revolution of spirit-life and destiny, that I see not only the fulfilment of its mission, but the demonstration of its Divinity.

In this, its Divine power beams out in a soul-inspiring radiance upon our spirits? Deeply do we need a strong faith in the Divine power of this old Gospel. The genuine *religious* revolutions are now, alas, so rare, that we are in danger of regarding it as something feeble, if not effete. Oh for an agency to wield it like that of Paul's, an agency which, by its intelligence, prayerfulness, and self-sacrificing benevolence, shall bring out its latent renovating force! He supplies the world with the strongest argument for the Divinity of the Gospel, who is most successful in bringing out the soul-renovating force which sleeps within it as the electric fires of God.

A Homiletic Glance at the Acts of the Apostles.

ABLE expositions of the ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, describing the manners, customs, and localities described by the inspired writers ; also interpreting their words, and harmonizing their formal discrepancies, are, happily, not wanting amongst us. But the eduction of its WIDEST truths and highest suggestions is still a felt desideratum. To some attempt at the work we devote these pages. We gratefully avail ourselves of all exegetical helps within our reach ; but to occupy our limited space with any lengthened archaeological, geographical, or philological remarks, would be to miss our aim ; which is not to make bare the mechanical process of the study of Scripture, but to reveal its spiritual results.

SECTION THIRD.—Acts i. 9—11.

“And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up ; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel ; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven ? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.”—Acts i. 9—11.

SUBJECT :—*The Ascension of Christ an Illustration of His Final Advent.*

AS His last words were falling in all their celestial melody and significance upon their ears, and as they were gazing in rapt attention at Him, He disappears. “When He had spoken”—literally, *having spoken*—“and while they beheld”—literally, *they beholding*—“He was taken,” &c. The words of the “two men who stood by them in white apparel,” as they were gazing intently on their ascending Master, justify us in looking at Christ’s ascension in order to illustrate His final advent. Here are their words :—“This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” “The Greek phrase *ὁν τρόπον*,” says a modern critic, “never indicates mere certainty or vague

resemblance ; but wherever it occurs in the New Testament, denotes identity of mode or manner." (Matt. xxiii. 37 ; Luke xiii. 34 ; Acts vii. 28 ; 2 Tim. iii. 8.) Some regard the advent here predicted by these "two men," as referring to Christ's coming in the destruction of Jerusalem ; others as referring to His coming by His Spirit on the day of Pentecost ; and others to His coming in the last judgment to settle the condition of humanity for ever. We leave others to canvass the merits of these views, whilst we adopt the last as the most generally received, and, we think, the best sustained.

I. He ascended in His ACTUAL PERSONALITY. He was taken up. It was not some shadowy form of Him, some apparition, some spectral outline of Him that they saw ascend heavenward ; it was He, *Himself*, their veritable Friend, Redeemer, Lord ; He whom they had followed three years ; with whom they had often mingled in closest fellowship ; whom they had seen die upon the cross ; and whose living words were now vibrating upon their ear and heart. After this His person was no more seen on earth. No one ever saw Him afterwards in Galilee, Jerusalem, or any other of the scenes of His favorite resort. Nor has any human eye since beheld Him on this terrestrial scene. He now at Bethany left the world, nor has the world ever seen His person since. Now this "*same Jesus*" is to come at last. These heavenly messengers said these words no doubt to comfort those who now beheld the dearest Object of their hearts depart. This same Jesus shall come ; the same loving Brother, tried Friend, and mighty Lord, will be seen at last coming in the clouds of heaven ; the Son of Man (Matt. xvi. 27), before whose dread tribunal will the great family of man at last appear. "We must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." (Rom. xiv. 10.) To what object in the retributive future have the good in all ages been encouraged to look ? "Their conversation has been in heaven, from whence also they have looked for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." (Phil. iii. 20 ; Col. iii. 3, 4 ; Tit. ii. 3.)

Blessed truth this. That which divests the future judgment of its terror ; that which makes it tolerable for men to look at ; that which may make it even an object of delightful anticipation, is, that the "*same Jesus*" will appear, and conduct its sublime transactions, as He who wept in tender sympathy over Jerusalem, and died in love upon the cross. "I know that my Redeemer liveth." (Job xix. 25.)

II. He ascended VERY UNEXPECTEDLY. The language gives the idea that they were struck with surprise. "While they beheld, he was taken up." With wondering souls they stood and looked stedfastly toward heaven as He went up. Though He had often told them that it was expedient for Him to go away, and that He would shortly leave the earth and them, yet His words had not the power on their hearts to make them expect His departure. They did not calculate that this was the last meeting. Perhaps as His lovely aspects and heavenly thoughts were thrilling their hearts with ecstacy, they hoped for many meetings more ; but in a moment, when they thought not, they see Him mysteriously ascend. In "like manner" He will unexpectedly appear in judgment. "As in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away ; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night." That such a day will dawn, is revealed with great clearness and frequency ; but *when* it will dawn, in what year of the world's history, still less in what month or week, is known to the Father only. It will take the world by surprise. The generation that will be here then, will be pursuing their ordinary avocations. Some will be navigating the deep, and some cultivating the soil ; some busy at their manufactories, and others engaged in commerce ; some taken up in politics, and others in literature and religion ; some in one clime of earth and sphere of life, and some in others, but all busy ; and

thus, while all the abounding myriads the world over are plying their faculties with the spirit of their avocations strong upon them, the harbinger of the dread crisis will startle the living and waken the dead with his blast, and on the awful heavens will be seen the Son of Man coming with great glory.

III. He ascended in a MYSTERIOUS GRANDEUR. Two things show this :—

First : *The receiving cloud.* “A cloud received him out of their sight.” What kind of a cloud was it ? Was it a dark thunder-cloud, like that with which the Almighty robed Himself on Sinai ? or was it a cloud luminous with unearthly rays like that which overhung the Messiah on the Mount of Transfiguration ? or was it a mystic cloud like that which guided and guarded the Israelites in their pilgrimage ! Who knows ? This we know, that clouds are emblems of grandeur. Thus Jehovah is said to make “the clouds His chariots, and to ride upon the wings of the wind.” Now it is remarkable that the Scriptures represent Christ as returning in clouds to judge the world. (Matt. xxiii. 40, xxvi. 4 ; Mark xiii. 26 ; Rev. i. 7 ; Dan. vii. 13.) The other circumstance which shows the mysterious grandeur is—

Secondly : *The two men.* “Two men stood by them in white apparel.” Who were those men ? Were they angels in human form, like the strangers who appeared at the resurrection ? It may be, that the same two angels who rolled away the stone, who appeared at His open sepulchre, were present now. Or were the two men Moses and Elijah, who had appeared at the Transfiguration, and talked about the decease He was to accomplish at Jerusalem ? Did the great legislator and the great reformer of Israelitish times appear now to witness His departure, and to welcome Him to heaven ? Perhaps so. Whoever they were, they were glorified beings sent to do honor to Christ. In like manner, also, He will come with glorified attendance. “He will come with all his holy angels.” “He shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.”

Gems of Thought.

SUBJECT :—*Earthquakes : their Moral Suggestions.*

“Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth.”—Psalm xviii. 7.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Twenty-fifth.

MEMORABLE in the annals of the British Island will remain for awhile the morning of October 6th, 1863, on account of that Earthquake whose mystic vibrations struck with a strange fear numbers of our countrymen in the dark and still watches of their sleeping hours. We had almost imagined that the encircling sea guarded our island-home from such terrible phenomena; that earthquakes, like the typhoon, the volcano, and other such destroying angels, were confined to distant lands. The subterranean storm, however, that heaved the other morning the green bosom of the earth, and made many of our countrymen's habitations reel and rattle, dispels all such delusions. Though folded in the arms of the sea, we are linked to those volcanic forces of the earth, the history of whose devastations is enough to strike horror into the most stolid soul. The devouring agent, which fills the history of the ancient world with records of great cities and vast populations of men, swallowed up in the fiery abysses of the yawning earth, which, in less than a century since, destroyed in five minutes Lisbon, and sixty thousand people, and which, in southern Italy, within these seven years, engulfed several towns, and thirty thousand men and women—bounds with furious force beneath our feet, here, in England, with every step we give, whether in the path of duty or pleasure. It is not for us here to speculate concerning the physical causes of earthquakes. With a Bible in our hands, we are privileged to regard the mightiest and the

most destructive forces of nature as the minister of His will, "who is wise in counsel, benevolent in purpose, and almighty in power." "He looketh on the earth and it trembleth, he toucheth the hills and they smoke."

We shall look upon the earthquake as suggesting the following things.

I. THE PERILOUS CONDITION OF OUR EARTHLY EXISTENCE. Deep is the sense of insecurity which the earthquake strikes to our inward souls. We feel that at any moment the soil on which we tread may rive asunder, and we and ours sink into the black, sulphurous, burning abyss. But this is only one out of many perils that every moment threaten our destruction. A breath of air may chill the blood; a whiff of noxious gas may poison the system; a flash of lightning may consume us in an instant. Above, beneath, around, everywhere, there are dangers threatening us with destruction.

Dangers stand thick on all the ground
To push us to the tomb.
And fierce diseases wait around
To hurry mortals home

This *insecurity* shows :—

First : *The absurdity of setting our affections on material good.* Why set your heart upon those objects from which you must soon be removed, and which themselves will soon pass away like a wreath of smoke? My countrymen—your London, your Manchester, your Liverpool, your great mercantile emporiums, with all their grandeur and wealth, and even your island-home itself, may be swallowed by that great earth-wave that is now heaving and rolling under your feet, and which has ere now engulfed many a magnificent city and fertile portion of the world. From the earth all earthly things proceed, and down into the depths of the earth they all must go again. Set your affections, then, on things above, which are spiritual and imperishable. This insecurity shows :—

Secondly : *The folly of postponing the preparation for*

eternity. Most men feel that they are destined for eternity, that some preparation should be made for that solemn state, and many propose some future time for such preparation. But how absurd to presume one minute upon the future when every minute is uncertain. Preparation, involving the cleansing of our spiritual natures, the forgiveness of our sins, and the reconciliation of ourselves to our Maker, should be the first effort of our intelligent life. This done, it matters little about our death—it matters not *when* we die—this year or next, or twenty years on ; or *where* we die—at home or abroad, in society or in solitude, amongst friends or foes, or *how* we die—by the fury of the forces beneath our feet, or those over our heads, by the torture of disease, or the exhaustion of age. This earthquake suggests :—

II. THE PROBABILITY OF A COMING CRISIS IN THE HISTORY OF OUR PLANET. The shock strikes one as prophetic of the world's doom. Geology teaches that the subterraneous forces of the earth have effected wonderful crises in its history. They have so changed it at different times as to have destroyed entirely its old productions, and its old inhabitants, and produced others in their place. These forces created and extinguished races of being long before the earth was fit to become the habitation of man. It is only natural to suppose, that the forces which swept away races that preceded them will one day sweep man from its sphere, and make the earth the habitation of other races of existences yet to be created. Poetry regards those earthquakes as symptomatic of the world's disease.

“ Diseased nature oftentimes breaks forth
In strange disruptions, and the teeming earth
Is with a kind of colic pinched and vexed.”

A diseased thing is mortal, and must die. Science gives a testimony concerning a coming crisis more positive and satisfactory. It points us to the heavens, to the fragmentary planets, to appearance of new stars and departure of old

ones, to comets careering through immensity and welding their loose materials at the solar furnace. It points us to the increasing resistance which our earth meets with in its spheric path, and which must one day bring it to a fatal stop. It points us to a new element that has been added to the atmosphere (ammonia) which is constantly increasing its proportions, and which, as it increases, heightens the tendency of the atmosphere to explode with a flash of lightning or a spark of fire. The Bible, however, assures us that such a crisis awaits the world. Christ frequently directed His hearers to the end of the world. Peter, in 2 Ep., chap. iii., describes in striking language the destruction of this earth : "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night." St. John, in his vision, "beheld the heaven and the earth pass away, and there was found no place for them." And he speaks, in chap. xvi., of a "great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great." The earthquake suggests :—

III. THE ELEMENT OF SEVERITY IN THE DIVINE GOVERNMENT. "God is love." But love has its aspects of severity towards that which opposes the happiness of the creation. Sin is this antagonist to happiness, and love frowns on it and thunders against it. Storms, pestilences, famines, and earthquakes, attest severity in the government of God.

First : *The sinner deserves the severity.* He has no right to expect what is mild, light, and beneficial from God. Love must oppose that which opposes the happiness of the creation. The sinner's conscience tells him that he deserves severity from God, and it is his conscience which adds terror to the earthquake. God of old made use of the earthquake to express His abhorrence of sin. When He descended on Sinai to proclaim His law, the earth quaked, and the mountains shook to their centre. When He expressed His abhorrence of the impiety of those who assumed the priesthood, He caused the earth to open her mouth and swallow them up. Thus He expressed His detestation of the

conduct of those who imbrued their hands in the blood of His Son. "Behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom, the earth did quake, and the rocks rent." In the earthquake it would seem as if nature groaned with weariness under the load of human sin that moved upon its surface and lived upon its fruits.

Secondly : *The sinner requires the severe.* He requires something that shall rouse his conscience, break in upon the sinful monotony of his life, and startle him into earnest effort concerning the salvation of his soul. The earthquake suggests:—

IV. THE WISDOM OF SEEKING THE DIVINE PROTECTION. Unless He becomes our guardian, our ruin is inevitable. A thousand forces stand around us threatening our ruin.

First : *His protection can be obtained.* Through a practical reliance upon the mediation of Christ for acceptance with Him, through a cultivation of the spirit of Christ, and an experimental belief of the truth as it is in Him, we place ourselves under the protection of the Eternal ; and we enter the pavilion of Infinite Love ; and are guarded by Omnipotence Himself.

Secondly : *The protection has been obtained.* The ancient believers enjoyed it ; they "felt God to be their refuge and strength, their very present help in trouble." The apostles enjoyed it ; they felt they were kept "by the power of God, through faith unto salvation."

Thirdly : *This protection secures from all danger.* The Psalmist felt this security when he said, "Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed." (Ps. xlv. 2.) The apostle felt it and said, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" &c.

Brethren, is God your protector? Solemn times are coming. The very earth beneath your feet is dying ; the vomitings of the volcano, and the throes of the earthquake prophesy its dissolution. The day hastens on when tremendous earthquakes, perhaps, shall rend this earth from

pole to pole, and cause its vast mountains, islands, and continents to heave, and whirl, and plunge like a frail bark on a tempestuous sea. Then there will be only one rock that will stand unmoved amidst the awful surges, only one ark that will float securely over the tremendous wreck. Take shelter on that rock and you are safe. Enter that ark and you are secure. That Rock is Omnipotence; that Ark is Christ. "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; yet my kindness shall not be removed from you."



MEMORABLE NIGHTS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

No. I.



SUBJECT :—*A Memorable Night : the First Gospel Sermon Preached, and the First Gospel Hymn Sung.*

"And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that

heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them."—Luke ii. 8—20.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Twenty-sixth.

SEVERAL of the Memorable Nights of the Old Testament have already appeared in the *Homilist*. We proceed now to notice some of the most remarkable ones in the New. The one chronicled in the paragraph above, stands out as the most memorable of all the memorable nights in the world's history. An event occurred on this night that excited heaven, touched the heart of the universe, and gave a new epoch to the world's history. He to whom all the sacred aspirations, prophecies, and ritualisms of past ages pointed, appears on the earth this night. The "Desire of all Nations" is born in a manger, and wrapped in swaddling clothes. Heaven has bestowed its highest and long-promised good to the world, and angels radiant with celestial glory come down to pronounce the tidings with the raptures of benevolence. There are at least two things which make this night memorable.

I. THE FIRST GOSPEL SERMON WAS PREACHED THIS NIGHT. The sermon delivered demands a special notice, on account of its subject, its preacher, its hearers, and its effects. Mark—

First: *The subject* of the sermon. The grand subject is the birth or advent of Christ. "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Observe, it was the birth of a *Saviour*. The world needed a Saviour; it was lost physically, intellectually, morally, socially. Many schemes promising salvation have been propounded, but have failed; but now *the Saviour* comes. His advent is a fact. Observe, further, it was the birth of a *Divine Saviour*; a Saviour which is Christ the Lord. Not the Christ of the Lord, but Christ the Lord Himself, the

Messiah. Nothing short of a *Divine* Saviour could meet the case. Many human saviours have appeared and failed ; the Divine One came at length, the One mighty to save. Observe, moreover, it was the birth of a Divine Saviour *for all people*. This made it "good tidings of great joy for all people." His redemptive mission is not confined to a class, a tribe, a nation, an age, but is for all people. This is the heart of the Gospel—the advent to the world of a Divine Saviour for all—this is the "good tidings." Mark—

Secondly : *The Preacher of the Sermon*. "Lo, the angel of the Lord." It seems to me in exquisite keeping with the event that an angel should be its first herald. It would indeed have been a thing for wonder if Heaven had been silent on the occasion : if it had not been the first speaker of the fact. This preacher appeared *unexpectedly*. The expression that "he came upon them" gives us the impression that he took the shepherds by surprise. He appeared *gloriously*.—"The glory of the Lord shone round about." Perhaps that mystic light which radiated in the bush of Moses, blazed in the pillar that conducted the Israelites through the wilderness, and gleamed over the mercy-seat in the Holy of Holies, now encircled this angel, and lighted up the scene with an unearthly brightness. He appeared *tenderly*. "They were sore afraid." Men have always been afraid of the supernatural. The angel perceived their terror, and sought with tenderness to allay it—"Fear not." The Gospel is not a message to frighten men, to generate slavish fear, but to awaken joy and hope. "Fear not : for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy." The fact that an angel was the first preacher shows : (1) What an interest angels have in the Gospel dispensation. (2) How earth and heaven are united through Christ ; and (3) What an honor it is to be engaged in the work of the ministry. We are successors of angels. Let us preach like this angel—not a limited, but a universal Gospel ; not to alarm with superstitious fear, but inspire with holy love and heavenly joy. Mark—

Thirdly : *The hearers of the Sermon*. Who formed this the

first congregation? Not the rulers of the age, not the chief priests and elders. Their pride and prejudice unfitted them to receive such a message as this. The hearers were "shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night." These men lived in close fellowship with nature; their minds were stirred more by the influences of the green fields, the mountains, the streams, and the skies, than the thoughts that flow through the social life of towns and cities. They were the unsophisticated children of nature, and would more readily catch a supernatural message than others. But the fact that poor shepherds were the first to whom the Gospel-message was addressed, suggests the glorious truth that the Gospel overlooks all adventitious distinctions, and deals with man as man. If it had been first addressed to men in the higher walks of life, it would have contributed to swell the pride of rank, by giving the impression that Heaven regards the conventional distinctions of earth. Mark—

Fourthly : *The effects of the first Gospel Sermon.* What were the effects? (1) They search after truth. "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which has come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us." They believed the fact, and at once acted upon it. They began their way to Bethlehem. (2) They discover Christ. "And they came with haste, and found Mary, Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger." The joy they felt on the discovery is not revealed, it is left to our imagination. The words they spoke to Mary and Joseph are not recorded, and we can only conjecture. Would they not tell the parents about the glorious angel and his wonderful message, and would not this add vigor to their faith. (3) They proclaimed the fact. "And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning the child." Through their influence the tidings spread through the neighbourhood, and men wondered. (4) They worship God. "And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God." Such, briefly, are the subject, the preacher, the hearers, and the effects of the first Gospel sermon that was ever preached, and preached on this

night. The other thing which makes this night memorable is :

II. THE FIRST GOSPEL HYMN WAS SUNG THIS NIGHT. Let us notice :

First : *The song.* "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men." The song has three parts, the last of which contains the grand reason of the other two. "*Glory to God in the highest.*" The mightiest region, amongst the highest intelligencies, in the highest degree. The mission of Christ manifests God's character in its fullest perfection : "He is the brightness of His Father's glory." "*Peace on earth.*:"—Peace in all souls, expelling all discordant emotions, and harmonizing all the forces and faculties of being ;—peace in the world, by generating the love of man to man, and binding the race in the bonds of a happy brotherhood ;—peace towards God, a happy joy in the consciousness of His forgiving love and fatherly affection. "*Good will toward men.*" This benevolence is the spring of all. Because of His good will He sent His Son, and because of the mission of His Son there is to Him glory in the highest and peace on earth. This is the first Gospel hymn. How simple, yet sublime. How concise, yet comprehensive. Would that all hymns had been fashioned after this model. Would that its spirit animated all worshippers. Alas ! how the spirit of this hymn is outraged by the practical life of millions of those who profess to be disciples of Christ. The spirit of the hymn of their life is this :—"Glory to self ; mammon ; pleasure—in the highest ; on earth disorder, confusion, war, bloodshed, extortion, oppression, vengeance towards men."

Secondly : *The singers.* "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God." Observe, their *numerousness*. "A multitude." The inhabitants of the angelic world are innumerable ; their name is Legion. Observe, their *sociality*. "They came together." They are not insulated beings, formed to live in their own individuality ; they have hearts to love, souls to blend and to

reciprocate; they move in vast companies, act in concert, and sing in choirs. Observe, their *descendibility*. How swiftly they sped their way from the upper heavens to the plains where the shepherds were keeping watch over their flock. Their celerity is wonderful; they travel as on the wings of lightning. Observe, their *religiousness*. They were praising God. Love to God was the fire of their souls. How do angels sing? what notes are theirs? Observe, their *philanthropy*. It was man that brought them down. To man they spoke; on man's soul they poured the rapturous music of their own spirits. What a night was this, then! The records of this night are in themselves a Bible. The events of this night are the highest chapters in the annals of our world. The influences of this night will go on accumulating in volume until they flood the world with a new life.



SUBJECT :—*The Seed Growing.*

“And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.”—Mark iv. 26—29.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Twenty-seventh.

TO the spiritual eye, every natural object is a sign of God's presence and operation; and the reader of the Bible knows that the continuance of the present system of things—*seedtime and harvest, summer and winter, and day and night*—is the fulfilment of God's promise when He revealed Himself after the Flood to the second father of the human race.

We do not read of Jesus admiring works of art, as buildings or garments, but He points to the wild flower. He spends much time in the wilderness and on the hill, and He

is ever the most conversant with those things which bear the most immediate impress of His Father.

To the same region belong His parables. They deal not with what is monstrous, prodigious, or extraordinary, but always with actual life, and largely with the life of nature. He has left His words in the sheepfold, and the vineyard, and among the fig trees, in the seed-field, and the harvest-field ; and there is no season of the year, and hardly a process of husbandry, which is not associated with His teaching, where His voice does not seem to linger as an echo of music.

The short and beautiful parable of the text is found only in Mark, being placed there in that numerous series which comprises the parable of the sower and that of the mustard seed. In that series it has an important place, and a meaning of its own.

I. THE SEED'S GROWTH IS LARGELY INDEPENDENT OF MAN'S AGENCY : "The earth bringeth forth fruit of *herself*." The man, must indeed, "cast the seed into the ground," but he has nothing more to do with its growth. It has an inherent vitality and power of growing, which only need favorable circumstances. In those circumstances the husbandman places it, but he can do no more. All his labor and skill would now be useless, and worse than useless ; therefore he will not tease the seed by interference, but knowing that it is best let alone, leaves it to the soil, the sun, the rain, and the air. He takes his rest at night undisturbed by anxiety, and rises by day to go about other work.

II. THE MANNER OF THE GROWTH IS HIDDEN FROM HUMAN KNOWLEDGE : "The seed springs and grows up, *he knoweth not how*." It is a great wonder, which fails to produce astonishment only because it is so common. No human understanding, however perspicacious, has yet penetrated this, or ever will. It is one of God's secrets, the presence of which amongst us perpetually reminds us of the limits of our knowledge.

III. THE GROWTH IS GRADUAL AND ORDERLY : “ *First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.*” The God of nature is never in haste. He loves orderly progression ; and this is nowhere more conspicuous than in the advancement of plants, step by step, each better than the last, towards their perfection.

IV. THE GROWTH IS FOR AN END, WHICH IS THE BRINGING FORTH OF FRUIT : “ *When the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.*” However beautiful the stages of vegetation, they are not for their beauty but for their use. It is indeed a proof of God’s exuberant kindness, that He has superadded so much beauty to so much usefulness, but the usefulness *is the end*. The green young blade is beautiful, but it does not linger long, it soon puts forth the ear ; the ear is beautiful, but it soon ripens. The field of ripe corn is one of the loveliest sights of the country ; but no time is to be lost in admiration : “ *immediately he putteth in the sickle.*”

From the seed’s independence of us we learn a lesson of *humility*. There is a limit to our power—after a time we are not wanted. We cast the seed into the furrow, God only can do the rest. His are the rain and the dew, the sunshine and the breath of spring ; His the quickening impulse and the blessing.

A similar lesson is learned from the mysteriousness of the growth. There is a limit to our knowledge as well as to our power. We know what kind of seed to sow, and we know the circumstances which are necessary for its growth. God only knows the rest.

The gradual progress of the plant teaches *patience*. We have to wait until the tender blade pierces the surface. Then we must wait for the ear, and then for the harvest. Our impatience, however eager, cannot hasten the process by a single moment.

From the whole we learn *gratitude to God*. The skill of the husbandman, as one of the conditions of a harvest, is

from Him ; as the prophet Isaiah teaches in a most beautiful passage (xxviii. 23—29). When the husbandman has done his work, success must come from God. *He giveth the increase.*

We turn now to the interpretation of the parable :—“ *So is the kingdom of God.*” Taking it broadly we see :—

I. THAT SPIRITUAL LIFE IN US IS LARGELY INDEPENDENT OF MAN. The good seed has an inherent vitality and power of growth. A man may teach another, insert the living seed in the soil, but he can no more : “ The earth bringeth forth fruit of *herself*.” Let us not then be over anxious about success, as though all depended on us. Such a disposition, whether in the husbandman or in the teacher, tends to rob God of His glory.

II. THE NEW BIRTH OF THE SOUL AND ITS SPIRITUAL PROGRESS IS A GREAT MYSTERY. All Divine things are mysterious, because God in every respect transcends the creature. It was to be expected that human redemption would be full of things untraceable. When the Lord is speaking to Nicodemus concerning the secret nature and operations of the Spirit, He says, “ Thou canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth ;” and immediately adds—“ *So is every one that is born of the Spirit.*” The Spirit’s offspring partakes of the Spirit’s mysteriousness. To pry curiously into the delicate processes which the Holy Spirit is conducting in the depths of the heart is unwise, injurious and profane. Let us not intermeddle with what is often beyond the reach even of the consciousness. To uncover the germinant seed is to weaken it and risk its destruction. Let us not so “ examine” ourselves, or allow any others to examine us, as to intrude on the proper domain of the Spirit, or as if we thought that the great work of grace within did not surpass the compass of our feeble understandings. There are many things which we cannot interpret. If even the seed-field baffles us, how much more God’s work in the heart !

III. THERE IS AN ORDERLY GRADATION OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE SPIRITUAL AS IN THE NATURAL WORLD. That little child, who is now comparing the information of sight and feeling, learning the shapes of various objects, and their distances from each other and from himself, will by and by learn to read. Afterwards, he may become a scholar or a politician ; but it must be the work of time. So with what is nobler. St. John's *little child* has not the knowledge and robustness of an adult Christian, nor has a *young man* in Christ the experience of a *father*. The blade does not shoot up in one night, and many nights and days must pass between seed-time and harvest. Let us be patient and hopeful.

Harvest-time will come at last, when the faithful husbandman shall be rewarded by the sight of fruit. Further on, our thoughts turn to that crowning joy and triumph, when the Church shall be complete and mature. *The Son of Man seated on the white cloud, having on His head a crown of gold, shall thrust in His sickle and reap, because the harvest of the earth is ripe.* (Rev. xiv. 14, 15.) Then shall the great Redeemer see and be satisfied for His original descent from heaven, His self-humiliation, labors, sufferings, and death. God will be glorified, and those who have been enabled to labor in His service, to prepare the ground, and sow the seed, will enter into His eternal joy, and give Him everlasting praise for the showers, the south wind, the sunshine, and the increase.

C. W.

SUBJECT :—*God's perfect remembrance of our Sins and Sorrows.*

“ My transgression is sealed up in a bag.”—Job. xiv. 17.

“ Put thou my tears into thy bottle.”—Ps. lvi. 8.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Twenty-eighth.

THESE two verses, from the similarity of Oriental imagery they employ, naturally suggest each other ; and may well be taken together as arguments for the same truth and illustrations of the same fact.

In the first, Job, in reviewing his sorrows and their cause, appeals to God with the cry—"My transgression is sealed up in a bag." He is thus evidently using the most careful method the Easterns had of guarding their wealth, namely, the sealing up their money in a bag, as an illustration of God's careful notice of his sin. He could have found no custom then in vogue that would have been a more striking figure of intensely-careful keeping; and this figure he employs to teach God's close observation, and perfect remembrance of man's sins.

In the second figure, the Psalmist is probably alluding to the custom of putting the tears shed by mourners in a bottle, and laying them on the tomb of the dead, as the most precious proofs of love. And this figure, than which nothing could convey a stronger idea of the value of tears, and of their careful preservation, David uses in his prayer to God with regard to his own tears. Hence the conclusion from the combined words of Job and David is, that God has as perfect a remembrance of our sins and sorrows as any earthly figure can express. This fact—taught so clearly in God's Word, in His Providence, and shall we not say in our own consciousness, for we *feel* that God remembers all about us—implies two other facts.

I. GOD'S INTIMATE ACQUAINTANCE WITH US. Knowledge is of course essential to memory, but what I want to lay upon our hearts is this thought:—How *intimately* God must know us, to be thus thoroughly acquainted with our sins and sorrows. For these two, our sins and sorrows, are the most unknown, secret parts of us. Our acquaintances and friends can only see the surface of our *sins*. There are in human nature dark depths which God's love has veiled from even the nearest and keenest human eye. The closest intercourse alone reveals the motives, the wishes, and the will; and these are the most corrupt portions of our sin. Perhaps our *sorrows* are more secret and private still. Sorrow is too sacred for the gaze of the mere acquaintance, too individual and personal for the perfect knowledge of our nearest friend. But so inti-

mate is God's knowledge of us, that He knows every sin, has seen every tear. The sin of the darkest hour, the most retired scene—yes, even of the most retired recess of the heart, was perfectly known to Him. The sorrow, too, of our most solitary hour, and loneliest experience, was endured beneath His eye. Friendship may afford close and sweet communion; thoughts may then mingle, and affections blend, we may fancy, perhaps, very perfectly. But between us and our nearest friend, closer to us than he could possibly be, there is a Presence, a Person. There is an Ear that listens to more than even reaches the ear of friend, an Eye that sees more than is observed by brother or mother. This perfect knowledge we should expect, if God be God at all. Nothing pertaining to us can be beyond the circle of his knowledge. The old sage said long ago, "God's centre is everywhere, His circumference nowhere," and the sacred oracle has clearly taught us "all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." The fact our texts teach implies :

II. GOD'S GREAT CARE FOR US. God not merely sees our sins, gazes on our tears, but has such profound interest in us that He treasures up all memories of us. They who care little for us, soon forget all of our circumstances and experiences that they may have learned. Not so with God. His care for us is as great as His knowledge of us. There are considerations which should lead us antecedently to this belief, a belief that Scripture teaches and experience confirms. God is our *Creator*, and from this relationship we should believe in His continued care for us. He surely looks with interest on the works of His hands, on the expression of His thoughts. God is our *Father*, and surely He has continual care for His sons. As His creatures, He sees in us His workmanship; but as His offspring—His children—He sees in us the reflection of Himself. He looks on His own image and surely cares for that. But above all, *God has sacrificed for us; His Son has suffered for us*; and here is a very mighty argument to believe He cares for us. Because parents sacrifice and suffer so much for children—parental, and

especially a mother's love, is the tenderest and most indissoluble on earth. Since God spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, will He not with Him also freely give us all things? Such considerations would lead us to anticipate the teaching of our subject, namely, that God has the greatest care for us.

We observed first of all that God has very intimate knowledge of us ; but this would be no Gospel at all, apart from this other fact, that God cares for us. What a joy it is that He who alone "knew what was in man," who, as He mingled with publicans, and harlots, and sinners of the deepest dye, seeing, to the very worst, all their guilt and grief, was the One who had such sympathy and mercy for them, that He alone of all the world bore such pain, endured such anguish, died such a sacrifice for those He knew so well ! What a joy it is that when we read "God is not far from any one of us," we can believe that not only is He not far as to place and knowledge, but is not far from us as to His care, His tenderness, His love.

The God who watches my sin, who observes so constantly and so strictly all my guilt, so that "my transgression is sealed up in a bag," is not a God of justice merely. No ! His wisdom is but the eye of His love. He sees my griefs as well as my guilt. He remembers my sorrows as well as my sin. He puts "my tears in his bottle."

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SUBJECT :—*Things New and Old.*

"Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord. Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old."—Matthew xiii. 51, 52.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Twenty-ninth.

NOTHING is more remarkable than the way in which the Almighty, in the arrangements of his wisdom, makes old things new. Though there is unity and unchanging life everywhere, there is no *sameness*. Even in the breaking of the day, the sun never rises with precisely the same appearances. The globe of fire burns with the same light, but the messengers that carry and reflect his beams, are so changing, that for these four thousand years some new form of beauty has graced his rising every day. The shadows creep over the hills or "wave across the wheat," but their processions vary with the changing hours. The river rolls "like God's immensity," but its waters "leap upon the crag," or whistle in the reeds with some fresh sound every day. There are old oak trees, beneath which Cavalier and Roundhead have taken shelter from the heat of battle, and none put forth fresher shoots in the springing of the year. Even if all power of renewing life is gone, some parasite clings round the storm-worn trunk, and makes its very decay beautiful. Things old and new are all about us from the treasury of the Great Householder. And this is the law of their renewal. *What is new feeds on and clothes an old unchanging life, and what is old ever seeks new expressions of its power.* So is it in the kingdom of heaven. Some amongst us are crying for progress and novelty, and some seeking the old paths and discarding everything new. The text may teach us the true wisdom. *New things are good only as they feed upon old life—old things are worthless when they do not blossom afresh.* The law of God's kingdom is the rule of the scribe. Let us mark the provisions which God has made for making old things new.

I. OLD THINGS BECOME NEW BY THE PROGRESS AND GROWTH OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE. After the Lord had taught his disciples in parables, He said to them, "Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord!" Then He replies, "Therefore every well instructed scribe," &c. As if He had said, "You think you understand them, and you may a little, but in after years you will come to them again, and evermore they will yield you new meanings." No lives better illustrate this truth than the apostles'. How differently these very parables would be understood in after years. The sower, with the glad and sorrowful issues of his work—the pearl-seeker with his long sought prize—the fisherman's net with its strange cargo—the leaven with its expanding life. Our own life teaches the same; as we have increased in knowledge and holiness, and our communion with God has been closer, old truths have yielded new treasures. The earthly life, cross and passion of our Lord, the resurrection from the dead, have come to us with new realizations of power, as our life has been deeper and our communion closer.

II. OLD THINGS ARE MADE NEW BY THE PARABLES OR RESEMBLANCES OF LIFE. The great laws of the kingdom of heaven were evermore the same after its first establishment upon earth; yet with what new light they were clothed, what new interpretations they received from the Saviour as He sat in the boat, weaving His parables from the shores and mountains of the sea of Galilee. The fields on the shore with their growing harvest, the pearl beneath the waters, the fisherman's net, the mixed throng that lined the shore bringing to us the larger company on the "further bank of time," are all pressed into the service. That busy lake, with its white sails and surrounding shores, is but a mirror of the world. The world is full of these resemblances to the deeper things of the kingdom of heaven. To perceive these analogies, and trace them in vivid pictures with living touches, is the work of the well-instructed scribe. By so doing, not only are sacred things interpreted by familiar experience, but common

life is made sacred, and most things that we see and hear will shadow forth the kingdom of heaven.

III. OLD THINGS ARE MADE NEW BY THE VARYING EXPERIENCE OF LIFE. *It needs an experience resembling a truth fully to enter into it.* We never learned until we sat and mourned like Job, what God could teach us in our sorrows. Old words of comfort came with new tones, like old faces with new expressions. There are some places in the world we can never see to advantage, unless we have watched them when a storm is raging, or in the failing of the light. So there are many truths, the beauty of which can never be seen, till we have been led into the house of mourning. In the same way, our "lands of Beulah," our "houses of peace," and "chambers of rest," interpret for us the joy of the Lord, and new experiences give fresh coloring to old truths.

IV. OLD THINGS ARE MADE NEW BY THE BREATH OF THE LIVING SPIRIT. After all, it is the wonderful life in and beneath all things, that brings forth all this variety. All the world over—in shaded glens and on the open plain, along the great rivers of the west, where the foot of man hath never trodden—it is bringing forth new forms of beauty, clothing the insects with their mantles and coiffures, and crowning the old earth with new wreaths. So, in the soul of man, in that wondrous scenery with which we are so little familiar, the same blessed Spirit that once filled the house with the rushing mighty wind, and sat in cloven tongues of fire upon the heads of the apostles, has been filling our desires and meditations and memories with His heavenly breath, so that no truths that we have learned and loved ever decay or grow old, but blossom with eternal freshness. Things old and new! Will the motto ever lose its truth and music? Ah no; for when we are inheriting the years of His eternity, the Hand that made the crowd to wonder beside the waters of Gennesaret, shall still be spreading its treasures upon another shore.

T. E. FULLER.

Biblical Exegesis.

THE WORDS τέρας, σημεῖον, δύναμις, ἔργον.

THERE are two classes of Divine works—those in which the Agent is concealed, and there is a chain of causes and effects ; and those in which the Agent is manifest, and there is no apparent cause but His presence and word. The first class are taking place every hour before our eyes, in nature ; the second class belong to *revelation*, in the proper sense of the word.

It may be useful to regard with care the names by which the second class of Divine works are called in the Bible. Let us first take the word τέρας. This word means *miracle*, *wonder*, *prodigy*, something which, being extraordinary, excites attention and is long remembered. It is perhaps related to the verb τρεῖν, *to tremble*, *to fear*. In the Septuagint it is mostly used for the Hebrew *mopheth*, of which Gesenius says, that “it properly means a *beautiful or splendid deed*.” It is sometimes used for *timmahon*, astonishment, terror ; for *pele*, something strange ; *shammah*, astonishment ; *manguash*, work. The wonder excited by a τέρας is not only on account of its strangeness, there being no apparent natural cause, but often on account of its beauty and splendor.

The next word, the most frequently used, and the most important of all, is σημεῖον, a *sign* or *token* : “an open act,” says Basil the Great, “having the manifestation of something by itself hidden and unapparent.” The Hebrew word is *oth*, and this sometimes means a token of a covenant, as the rainbow. The rainbow was nothing new, but God gave it a new meaning. The feast of the passover was an *oth* to the Israelites of their deliverance from Egypt. Again, Isaiah and his children, with their significant names, were *othoth*, signs to Israel that God’s promise would be fulfilled. But an *oth* in the Old Testament is often a sign of God’s presence and operation, “a finger-post of God.” In Exod. iv. 8, the changes of the rod in the hand of Moses were to be signs to the Hebrews that the God of

their fathers had appeared to him for their good. See also, Deut. iv. 34, where the reference is to the works by which God had effected the deliverance of his people from Egypt ; and Judges vi. 17, where Gideon asks a sign from the angel to confirm his faith, and was granted " fire from the rock," verse 21. In the New Testament the word *σημεῖα*, as applied to the works of Jesus, signifies God's presence with Him as the Christ ; as applied to the works wrought by His servants, and in His name, it signifies their authentic commission by Him. Thus Paul speaks of " the signs of an Apostle." (2 Cor. xii. 12). A *σημεῖον* then, is an indication that God is revealing Himself, using His power, in order to show forth His beauty and His loving-kindness.

The word *δύναμις* properly signifies *power*, and the works in question are called *powers*, from the Almightyness which is the cause of them. As the Hebrew word for God carries the notion of *strength*, it is congruous that a revelation of God should include a manifestation of power. The Creator has subjected to every creature a certain domain of nature in which his power may be exercised, and his will take effect. Man has a wider domain than a beast, and angels than men. But a creature's power, however exalted he be, is limited at last. And it is something which is only given to him, and in its exercise is a mystery to himself. But God's power over nature is boundless, original, and self-conscious. When we see this boundless power exercised by a person, we know that that Person is God.

The essence of the works in question lies not in their strangeness. Therefore, in the New Testament, they are never styled *τέρατα* alone. Their essence is properly denoted by the word *σημεῖα* ; they are *revelations* of power, will, and character. Hence the name *σημεῖα* often stands by itself. So also does *δυναμεις*, since power is the instrument of the revelation.

It is evident that, in order to represent the use of the original words to the English reader, and to preserve for his instruction the Scriptural aspect of the works in question, each of these words should have been carefully fitted by an English word, and that English word carefully retained. Unfortunately, this is not done in our version.

Hoping that the reader will bear in mind the above remarks, we now proceed to cite certain passages which have suffered through inexactness of rendering. As we have not

space to print the authorized version of them, we request the reader, when his memory fails, to refer to his Bible for the purpose of comparison. For our present object we render *τίρας* by *wonder*, *σημεῖον* by *sign*, and *δύναμις* by *power*.

Matt. vii. 22.— . . . and in thy name done many *powers* ?

Matt. xiv. 2.—This is John the Baptist ; he is risen from the dead ; and therefore *powers do work* in him.

Mark ix. 39.—Forbid him not ; for there is no man which shall do a *power* in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me.

Luke xxiii. 8.— . . . he hoped to have seen some *sign* done by Him.

John ii. 11.—This beginning of *signs* did Jesus in Cana of Galilee.

John iii. 2.— . . . no man can do these *signs* that thou doest, except God be with him.

John iv. 54.—This is again the second *sign* that Jesus did, when He was come out of Judæa into Galilee.

John vi. 2.—And a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His *signs* which He did on them that were diseased.

John vi. 14.—Then those men, when they had seen the *sign* which Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.

John vii. 31.—When the Christ cometh, will He do more *signs* than these which this man hath done ?

John ix. 16.—How can a man that is a sinner do such *signs* ?

John x. 41.—John did no *sign* ; but all things that John spake of this man were true.

John xi. 47.—What do we ? for this man doeth many *signs*.

John xii. 18.—For this cause the people also met Him, for that they heard that He had done this *sign*.

John xii. 37.—But though He had done so many *signs* before them, yet they believed not on Him.

Acts ii. 19, 22.—And I will shew *wonders* in heaven above, and *signs* in the earth beneath. . . . Jesus of Nazareth, a man *pointed out* of God among you by *powers*, and *wonders* and *signs*.

Acts iv. 16, 22.—What shall we do to these men ? for that indeed a notable *sign* hath been done by them is manifest. . . . For the man was above forty years old, on whom this *sign* of healing had come to pass.

Acts vi. 8.—And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great *wonders* and *signs* among the people.

Acts viii. 6, 13.—And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the *signs* which he did. . . . Then Simon himself believed also : and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the *signs* and *great powers* which came to pass.

Acts xv. 12.—Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what *signs* and *wonders* God had wrought among the Gentiles.

Acts xix. 11.—And God wrought *powers not usual* by the hands of Paul.

Rom. xv. 19. By the *power* of *signs* and *wonders*, by the *power* of the Spirit of God.

1 Cor. xii. 10, 28, 29.—To another *the operations of powers*. . . . And God hath set in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, afterwards *powers*, then gifts of healings. . . . Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all *powers*?

2 Cor. xii. 12.—Truly the *signs* of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in *signs*, and *wonders*, and *powers*.

Gal. iii. 5.—He then that ministereth to you the Spirit and worketh *powers* among you, doeth he it, &c.

Heb. ii. 4.—God also bearing them witness, both with *signs* and *wonders* and divers *powers*, and allottings of the Holy Ghost.

The fourth word in our list, *ἔργον*, is generic. It is simply *work*, and is, therefore, applied to God's operations in nature, as well as when more distinctly revealing Himself. In St. John's Gospel this word is constantly applied, *by Jesus Himself*, to the signs and wonders which He wrought. (John v. 36, vii. 21, x. 25, 32, 38, xiv. 11, 12, xv. 24. See also Matt. xi. 2). This use is most remarkable and instructive. It shows us that Christ's miracles were one with His other deeds—they manifested His character. Those who knew who He really was were no longer astonished at His actions, however powerful. These were only parts of the great wonder, the Incarnation of the Word.



The Christian Year.

BY A CLERGYMAN.

Advent.

“Behold, the Lord cometh.”—Jude 14.

THIS majestic fragment of a long lost book, like some surviving torso, gives us a conception of what must have been the perfection of the whole. It also shows the character of Enoch's piety, who is described as “walking with God,” and is commended as having “pleased God” by his *faith*. It was not the unsubstantial piety of the deist, who worships God merely as the Author of nature, but it was *faith in the God of revelation*, who had revealed Himself to Adam as the Holy One and the Just, who was revealing Himself to Enoch in his capacity as prophet, and who would reveal Himself again and again in fulfilment of His word. The God of the deist never *comes*; the God of the Bible has *come* and is ever *coming*.

It is significant that this most ancient recorded prophecy should begin with that with which the last Old Testament prophet ends the ancient literature of Israel, and with which the prophet of Patmos also closes the New Testament. “*Behold, the Lord cometh,*” says Enoch. “*The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come,*” says Malachi. Christ's name in the Apocalypse is still *the Coming One*. He says in the end of that book of mystery, “*Surely I come quickly,*” and the Church answers, “*Even so, come, Lord Jesus.*” Christ's Advent is the chief burthen of the prophetic message.

The verb *to come* has a peculiar meaning in the phraseology of Scripture, first, in the Old Testament, and by derivation, thence, in the New. It is used to signify *God's manifestation*

of *Himself* to men, either in wrath or in mercy. So constant is this use, that this may be regarded as *the* Biblical word for that which we call *revelation*. Reference to a few of the leading passages will illustrate this.

In Deut. xxxii. 2. Moses is speaking of God's revelation of Himself to Israel in the wilderness :—

And he said,
Jehovah *came* from Sinai,
And *rose up* from Seir unto them ;
He shined forth from mount Paran,
And He came with ten thousands of saints :
From His right hand went a fiery law for them.

In Ps. xl. 7, 8, Christ Himself is speaking of His advent :—

Then said I, Behold I *come* ;
In the volume of the book it is written of me.
To do thy pleasure, O my God, I delighted ;
And thy law is in the midst of my soul.

In Ps. xvi. 12, 13, David predicts the advent :—

Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein :
Then shall shout for joy all the trees of the forest
Before Jehovah :
For He cometh, for He cometh to judge the earth :
He shall judge the world in righteousness,
And peoples in His truth.

In Isaiah lix. 20, the prophet predicts the appearing of the Redeemer :—

And there *shall come* to Zion a Redeemer,
And shall turn away transgression from Jacob, saith
Jehovah.

Since, then, *the coming of God* means in Scripture, *God's revelation* of Himself, there have been as many *comings* as occasions of revelation. The *divers manners* of action, speech, and influence, whereby God manifested Himself of old, were all so many *comings*. He *came* to destroy the Cities of the Plain ; He *came* to deliver Israel from Egypt ; He *came* to mount Sinai ; He *came* to His temple ; He *came* whenever an inspired prophet prophesied. But as all revelation

culminates in Christ the Mediator, the appearing of Christ is called *the Coming*. And as there has been one appearing of Christ which is the object of our faithful and loving remembrance, and there is to be another which is the object of our hopeful anticipation, so we speak of the First and Second Advents of our Lord. These two Advents are the two chief moments in the history of the world, and give character to all our revealed religion.

The two Advents are not clearly distinguished in the prophets, but their descriptions are blent together. Nor are they separated in the celebration of this season. At the commencement of the Christian Year, the Church commemorates the First Advent, and looks forward to the Second. They are undistinguished in this prophecy of Enoch's, which holds good of both. The two Advents must largely have a common character, or they could not have been both predicted in the same words.

The Coming of Christ is—

I. FOR JUDGMENT : *To execute judgment upon all.*

Judgment is not necessarily condemnation. Here it takes effect on all. It is the discrimination of righteousness ; the highest moral perspicacity and authority in exercise upon its proper objects. Some are approved, others are condemned ; some are attracted, others repelled ; and thus a separation is effected. No two parties were ever more clearly defined and distinguished, than those whom Jesus—who knew the character of every man—approved on the one hand and condemned on the other. The appearing of the Lord of the holy law and of the conscience, necessarily had a judicial effect. He attracted John and repelled Caiaphas. Even when He was on the Cross, He proved a divider. Penitence was on one hand, obstinacy on the other.

So will it be at last. Omniscient holiness will ascend the judgment seat. He will approve or condemn every individual of that vast assembly, and every individual will be either attracted or repelled. The words *Depart* and *Come* are the

authoritative utterance and practical conclusion of sentiments which are necessary and mutual. The diseased conscience of Caiaphas had of old no complacence in his Prisoner, and when their positions are reversed, terror will supersede dislike. "God's justice," says an old writer,* "is an attribute, whereby he separateth all those from His presence that are unlike to Him."

The Coming of Christ is—

II. FOR CONVICTION : *and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.*

The sins specified in the context are *ungodly deeds* and *hard speeches* against God. Enoch, although himself a sublime saint, lived in an age of wickedness, which rendered his independence the more conspicuous and his piety the more excellent. The *ungodly deeds* were acts of rebellion against the rightful Lord ; and the *hard speeches* were blasphemies, perhaps for exclusion from the Garden, for the obstinacy of the soil, and the labor which it rendered necessary to obtain food. The prophet predicted that the Lord at His coming would convince sinners of their wickedness, would not only condemn them, but *make them condemn themselves*.

In the time of Christ, sinners were conscience-stricken. The Pharisees cowered before His eye and His voice. The publican Zacchæus was brought to repentance and restitution. Rash but infirm Peter was moved to tears. The dying thief was led to penitence and the prayer of faith.

So, at last, every sinner will feel, as he has never felt before, his own wickedness and folly. The revelation of the Judge will impart to conscience new vitality and force. Ungodly deeds will be seen in all their hideousness, and dissonant echoes of old blasphemies will re-awake in the halls of memory. This *conviction* will render the inevitable society of self intolerable. The conviction produced by the First

* Dr. Gideon Harvey.

Advent gave occasion for repentance, but that produced by the Second will be the instrument of vengeance.

The Scriptures speak not only of a *coming of God to men*, but of *men coming to God*. It is the merciful intention of the one to bring about the other. All our religion takes its character from Divine revelation. If God reveals himself to us as our righteous Lord, loving Father, and self-sacrificing Redeemer, it is ours to yield us to Him in faith, gratitude and service. Placed as we are between His two advents, looking back on the one and forward to the other, let us *come* in obedience to the invitation of the First, and the invitation of the Second shall be ours also.



The Preacher's Finger-Post.

GOD'S LOVE GREATER THAN A MOTHER'S.

"Can a mother forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee."—Isa. xlix. 15.

THERE is a tendency in trouble to generate in the mind of the good misgivings as to God's affection for them. They often start the question, "If He loves us, why are we thus afflicted?" Thus the good men of old felt in Babylonian exile. "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me." In the text, the great God condescends to

give the strongest assurance to the contrary. "Can a woman forget her sucking child," &c. The love of a mother for her child is the strongest natural affection under the sun. The following touching incident was related by the Rev. Norman Macleod, of Glasgow:—His father was preaching on the love of God, and to illustrate his subject, referred to a poor widow in Scotland, who, being distressed for rent, resolved to go, carrying her helpless babe with her, and borrow of a friend that lived ten miles from her home. The journey lay across a bleak mountain,

and the day was rough and snowy. Soon after her departure, the neighbours felt it would be impossible for her to reach her destination, and feared that her very life was endangered by the snowstorm that was rapidly gaining in violence. Twelve strong men resolved to go in search; far away on the mountain they found the poor woman lying in the snow, sleeping the sleep of death. Where was the babe? In a sheltered nook in the rock, close by, warm and alive, because wrapt in the garments of which the mother had deprived herself. Yet, strong as it is, God's love for the good and the true is stronger. A few points will illustrate this.

I. A MOTHER'S LOVE FOR HER CHILD IS BUT A FRACTION DERIVED FROM GOD'S LOVE FOR MAN. All the affection that glows in the heart of the most loving mothers at this moment on earth is but a ray from the eternal sun, a drop from the fathomless ocean, of His love. Strong as it is, therefore, it is as nothing to His. If this affection, then, seldom forgets the sucking child, how infinitely unlikely it is that the affection of the Eternal Father will allow Him to "forget" His children.

II. THE STRONGEST AF-

FECTION OF A MOTHER IS SUBJECT TO MUTATIONS. First: *The conduct of the mother may cool or even quench this spark within her.* In some cases debauchery, intemperance, and vice have extinguished this sacred fire, and the parent has become unnatural and cruel to her offspring. Secondly: *The conduct of the child may cool or even quench this spark within her.* The child may grow up in vice, become so monstrous in depravity as to turn this love into loathing and abhorrence. But the affection of the Eternal is subject to no such mutation. No change can take place in Him, and the changes that take place in the objects of His love were all known to Him before He loved them. "Who, then, shall separate us from the love of God," &c.

III. THE OBJECT OF THE MOTHER'S LOVE IS NOT SO NEAR TO HER AS THE OBJECT OF THE DIVINE AFFECTION. First: *The mother is not the owner of the child.* His limbs, faculties, being, are not hers. But God is the absolute Proprietor of man. "All souls are His." Secondly; *The mother is not the life of the child.* Her life is distinct from that of her offspring. But God is the very life of man. His constant visitation

preserveth his spirit. He lives in man and man lives in Him.

IV. THE FAILURE OF THE MOTHER'S AFFECTION TOWARDS HER OFFSPRING WOULD NOT BE SO TERRIBLE AS THE FAILURE OF GOD'S AFFECTION TOWARDS THE GOOD. The mother may withdraw her affection from her child, she may become unnatural and cruel; yet the child, thrown upon his own resources, may get on. Her very desertion may so stimulate him to use his faculties that he may reach a position higher than that he could have reached under her fostering care. But if God forsakes a man, he is ruined inevitably, and for ever—His desertion is hell. These thoughts help us, in some humble measure, to catch the force of the assurance which the Eternal makes to His people in the text.

CHRIST'S WONDERFUL MISSION.

"Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father."—Gal. i. 4.

FROM this passage we learn—

I. CHRIST'S MISSION WAS A SELF DEDICATION. "Who gave himself for our sins." The expression suggests—First:

Self-Proprietorship. We can only truly give that which belongs to us. Christ's existence was His own. He was the only being that ever appeared on this earth that could say—"I am my own." Because of this, He had a right to present Himself a sacrifice. The expression suggests—Secondly: *Pure spontaneity.* He gave—no coercive force compelled Him to it—He was absolutely free. He had power to lay down His life and power to take it up again. The word suggests—Third: *Supreme benevolence.* The most valuable property a man has is himself. Lordly estates and princely crowns are dust in the balance to this. Christ gave Himself: a greater gift than if He had presented all the systems of immensity. From this passage we learn that:—

II. CHRIST'S MISSION WAS FOR THE REMOVAL OF SIN. It was for our sins. "That he might deliver us from this present evil world." First: That He might *deliver us from the guilt of the sin of the present evil world.* This He does by His sacrificial death, which laid the foundation of our forgiveness. "Whom God hath set forth," &c. Secondly: That He might *deliver us from the dominion of the sin of the present evil world.* That

He might *free the intellect from error, the affections from impurity, the will from prejudices, and the whole soul from all the fettering forces of sin.* From this passage we learn :—

III. CHRIST'S MISSION WAS ACCORDING TO THE DIVINE WILL. "According to the will of God and our Father," Christ Himself declared this, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." (John vi. 38, 40—x. 18—xvii. 2, 6, 15). Though he was absolutely free in His work, yet in His freedom He was working out the will of His Father. Indeed, the only true freedom consists in working out the plan of God. Such is the mission of Christ. Let us regard Him with adoring gratitude, and practically trust Him as our only Deliverer.

PROFITABLENESS OF PRAYER.

"What profit should we have, if we pray unto him."—Job xxi. 15.

THIS is a selfish question, and foreign to the spirit of prayer; still it is often asked, and admits of an answer that may satisfy the most greedy soul. What profit? We answer—

I. A CONSCIOUSNESS OF HAVING DONE A RIGHT THING.

To approach our Maker in penitence for our sins, in gratitude for His mercies, and in humble entreaty for His continued care, His pardoning and sanctifying grace, is a service most obviously right and reasonable. He who discharges it will be rewarded by a happy consciousness of having done the right thing. "What profit?" We answer—

II. A REALIZATION OF HIS PRESENCE. Prayer implies conscious contact with God. It is the soul feeling that the Eternal is near it to hear its petitions. This realization is highly profitable. First: *It quickens the spiritual powers.* It stirs the profoundest sympathies of the soul, and brings the highest faculties into play. Secondly: *It destroys our pride.* The soul, in the presence of God, feels its nothingness. Pride, the precursor of ruin, withers in the conscious presence of the Infinite. Thirdly: *It spiritualizes our nature.* The soul in the presence of its Maker feels the world to be a mere passing scene, a fleeting shadow, a mere bubble in the stream of being. "What profit?" We answer—

III. A RESPONSE TO YOUR ASPIRATIONS. Real prayer is ever answered. Not, perhaps,

the receiving of the thing sought, nor in the manner expected; still it is always answered. First: *God's Word assures us of this.* "Ask and ye shall receive," &c. It furnishes us also with numerous instances of success—Abraham, Moses, Elijah, Hezekiah, the Apostles. Secondly: *Christian experience testifies to this.* What an old Hebrew saint has said, the pious in every age can say: "I cried unto the Lord and he heard me."

GOD'S MERCY TOWARDS A SOUL-THIRSTING WORLD.

"And the Spirit, and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."—Rev. xxii. 17.

MEN'S souls everywhere burn with a thirst for a good they have not. "Who will show us any good?" is the deep, world-wide cry. God has attended to this cry, and in doing so we discover His wonderful mercy.

I. IN THE PROVISION HE HAS MADE FOR IT. "The water of life." First: *The provision is exquisitely suitable.* What can quench the thirst like water? What water is to the thirsty body, the Gospel is to the ever-craving soul,

exquisitely fitted to meet the case. Secondly: *The provision is absolutely free.* It is free to us all. "Whosoever will." All tribes and classes of men are included in this "whosoever." It is free, without payment, without money and without price. The provision is as free as the air we breathe. His wonderful mercy is seen:

II. IN THE PRESSING INVITATION TO THE PROVISION. First: *The Divine Spirit says: "Come."* He is constantly wooing souls to this Water of Life. Secondly: *The Christian Church says "Come."* The Church takes up the invitation of the Spirit, repeats, and spreads it. Thirdly: *The mere hearer is commanded to say "Come."* He, on whose ear the distant echo of the word "come" may fall, should take it up and voice it on. Thus Infinite Mercy has not only made such a provision, but sounds the invitation through the Spirit, through the Church, through all that hear. Come! come! come! He speaks to the world through a thousand voices.

TEMPERATED SORROW FOR THE DEPARTED GOOD.

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have

no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."—1 Thess. iv. 13, 14.

First : *Death creates sorrow in the breast of the living.* To weep over the grave of the loved ones is natural. Religion does not stifle the sensibilities of our nature, nor dry up the fountain of our tears. Christ himself wept over the grave of Lazarus. Second : *Sin intensifies the sorrow of the living for the dead.* The apostle speaks of others that sorrow "*which have no hope.*" To the heathen, death is a terrible thing ; it is an eternal extinction, an everlasting separation, &c. Nor to the Jews was it a much brighter thing. To them, for the most part, the grave was a starless midnight, a chaos of confusion, a land of darkness as darkness itself. Thirdly : *Christianity temperates our grief for the dead.* This is the object of Paul's exhortation : an exhortation which contains two general arguments against excess of grief for the holy dead.

I. THEIR PRESENT CONDITION. They are not gone out of existence, nor are they even in purgatorial fires, they are now only asleep. (1) Sleep is a welcome state. How wel-

come is the chamber of repose to him whose limbs are wearied with the toils of the day. Even so death is welcome to those who have borne the burden and the heat of life's probationary day, and desire to depart. (2) Sleep is a state of security. Men do not commit themselves to sleep till they are satisfied as to the safety of their position. How secure are the holy dead ! they have died in the Lord. (3) Sleep is a state of re-invigoration. It gives a new tone to the system, a new vigor to the limb. No bath is so invigorating to the system as a bath in the wave of oblivion. The holy dead renew their strength in eternity. (4) Sleep is a state of anticipation. Men yield themselves to repose with the hope of a morning. The dead shall rise from their slumbers. The other argument is :—

II. THEIR FUTURE DESTINY. "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again," &c. Observe—(1) The nature of the future destiny. God will bring them with Him. "*God will bring them.*" He is coming. "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints." (Jude 14.) He will bring them *with Him*—with Christ. Christ will come as the judge of all

mankind, "in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." They will be *with* Him, not as disembodied spirits, but as perfected, glorified men. "This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. Observe—(2) The *certainty* of the future destiny. The certainty is based upon the fact that "Jesus died and rose again." These are the two great cardinal facts of the Gospel, facts attested by every species of evidence. How strong, then, the argument for temperating our sorrow over the holy dead. Their present state is rest; they are asleep in Jesus. They sleep safely, sweetly, and strengtheningly; as the babe sleeps on the breast of her who bore it, and loves it with a love stronger than death. Their future prospects are bright. *God will bring them with Him.* There is a day for the manifestation of the sons of God. They will be seen with Him by an assembled universe as the redeemed of His grace, the children of His adoption, and the sharers of His glory.

THE BETHEL YACHT OF GALILEE.

"And he spake to his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him."—Mark iii. ix.

YACHT means a passenger boat. Some suppose, and it is highly probable, that a ship was kept for His special use. In Matt. viii. 23, the definite article is used, τὸ πλοῖον, and the words in the text fully imply this: προσκαρτερῇ αὐτῷ, "should constantly be in waiting for Him." The Lord spent three parts of His public ministry, both in time and works, near the Sea of Galilee. "Most of his mighty works were done" (Matt. xi. 20) in Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum. On its shores he called Peter, Andrew, and the rest of the twelve; not far off was preached the Sermon on the Mount; here, too, the five thousand and the four thousand were fed; after His resurrection it was here He showed himself to His disciples, even to the number of five hundred at once. What undying memories hast thou, O Sea of Galilee!

"It is not that the wild gazelle
Comes down to drink thy tide,
But He that was pierced to save from
hell
Oft wandered by thy side."

McCHEYNE.

I. THE MASTER. First:
A man. A man and a

brother ; considerate, affectionate, compassionate. One who shared in the joys, sorrows, and toils of our common life. One who delighted to call Himself the Son of Man. Secondly: *God*. Mysterious, wonderful, awful. He exercised the authority, He put forth the power of God. Not a town, scarcely a landing place, of this sacred sea but witnessed His mighty power ; power to feed, heal, restore sight and hearing ; power to calm the raging of the sea, and to roll back the winds behind the mountain tops. But He came not to dazzle and affright. These "mighty works" were but stepping-stones by which the believing might rise to behold the putting forth of Divinest power, the power to pardon sins. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." "I am come that ye might have *life*, and that ye might have it more abundantly." "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost."

II. THE CREW. The twelve disciples. I fancy Peter at the helm of his own, newest, best little ship ; never such a master, such a crew. Bound not by "articles" but by love, they work not for themselves but for Him. "They seek not their own," &c. In

perplexity, He cleared away their ignorance ; in failure, he helped them first, reproved them afterwards. "Lord, save me, and immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore did'st thou doubt?" (Matt. xiv. 30, 31.) Observe the order of time in this thrilling narrative. Blessed followers of a blessed Master !

III. THE VOYAGES. Not for traffic, barter, pleasure, plunder, war. They went fishing, not for fish, but for men. Voyages of unmixed blessing. We are not told the number ; but where sick folk were clustered, waiting for, and wanting Jesus, thither her course was shaped, and as she touched the strand, how would her happy crew bound to tell of His arrival.

LESSONS :—First : *This Master still lives.* He brought the Godhead down to earth, He has carried our manhood into heaven. Heaven is moored to our race by the two natures of Christ. Let not the sinner cut with his own hand this double bond ; if he does, he must drift for ever in the stormy gulf of perdition. Secondly : *Disciples are still found.* They

exhibit the same characteristics of the first chosen crew, certainly in failings, may we not say, also, in faith? Are there not many who count success in Christ's service their highest reward; who love Him first, and best, and most, and long to serve Him

better? Thirdly: *The voyages of Christianity are not yet ended.* She goes to bless the world.

"Waft, waft, ye winds His story,
And you, ye waters, roll,
Till, like a sea of glory,
It spreads from pole to pole."

"Will ye also be his disciples?"

H. T. MILLER.

The Pulpit and its Handmaids.

HISTORICAL NOTICES OF DISCOVERY.

At the head of the list stands that of Sir Isaac Newton, one of the greatest minds of ancient or modern times, and the bare mention of which is connected with the most sublime of sciences. That ardent, but humble spirit of inquiry, so necessary to success, was characteristic of his mind. Hence he used to speak of himself as having been all his life but "a child gathering pebbles on the seashore." This shows the spirit in which he pursued his investigations; and he was accustomed modestly to say that "if there was any mental endowment in which he excelled the generality of men, it was that of patience in the examination of the facts and phenomena of his subject." It was from one of the most simple incidents that Newton was enabled to disclose to the world the system of the universe—that of the *fall of an apple*, a thing that had been observed millions of times without any recognition and application of that principle which he discovered and carried out into the boundless universe. It is said to have taken place in his twenty-third year, when, during the prevalence of the

plague in London, at his retreat in the country, he was one day sitting or lying under an apple tree, in his garden, and an apple fell beside him; he immediately began to reflect on the cause of the fall of the apple, which, attributing to the right principle—the attraction of gravity—he extended it to the universe, and found that it was that which kept the sun in the centre of the solar system, the planets in their orbits as they revolve around him, and their satellites in their orbits around them. The existence of gravitation, or a tendency to fall towards the centre of the earth, was already known as affecting all bodies in the immediate vicinity of our planet; and the great Galileo had even ascertained the law, or rate, according to which their motion is accelerated as they continued their descent. But no one had as yet dreamed of the gravitation of the heavens, till the idea now first dimly rose on the mind of Newton. The name of Galileo furnishes another illustrative example of important discovery from common occurrences, and of the triumph of science. Standing one day in the metropolitan church of Pisa, he noticed the movements of a suspended lamp, which some

accidental disturbance had caused to vibrate. The application of this regular motion to the measurement of time suggested itself to him. And the invention of the *pendulum* was the result—the principle of the most perfect measure of time that we have. Now this incident had no doubt been noticed thousands of times before by others; but it was reserved for the philosophic attention of Galileo to turn it to advantage, though he was not yet twenty years of age.

"How striking an example is this for us," observes an eminent writer, "when we discover, or think we discover, any fact in the economy of nature which we have reason to believe has not previously been observed! Let it at least be verified and recorded. No truth is altogether barren; and even that which looks, at first sight, the very simplest and most trivial, may turn out fruitful in precious results."

It was from a circumstance, if not similar, yet partaking of the nature of the same simplicity, that this philosopher discovered the noble instrument which has rendered him most illustrious, and given his name the greatest notoriety. While he was residing at Venice, a report came to that city, that a Dutchman had presented to Count Maurice, of Nassau, an instrument by which distant objects were made to appear as if near. This was all that was stated, and this was enough for the mind of Galileo. He set himself to work, and soon found that by a certain arrangement of spherical glasses he could produce the same effect. The discovery of the *telescope* was the result.

To a very simple circumstance we owe the discovery of one of the most beautiful of modern arts. Prince Rupert, one morning, noticed a soldier rubbing the rust off his gun barrel, occasioned by the

dew of the night before, and that it left on the surface of the steel a collection of very minute holes, resembling a dark engraving, parts of which had, here and there, been rubbed away by the soldier. The kind of engraving called *mezzotinto* was thus suggested to him, and its invention the result of his experiments.

The waving of a linen shirt hanging before the fire, in the warm and ascending air, or the ascending of smoke in a chimney, suggested to Stephen Montgolfier the invention of the *balloon*.

The discovery of *galvanism* affords another of those instances of a great result from a very simple occurrence. About the year 1790, Galvani, a professor in the University of Bologna, was engaged in a series of experiments to show the intimate connection between muscular motion and electrical action. One day, some dead frogs, which were intended to make soup for his lady, who was ill, were lying on a table near an electrifying machine, when a student, in the absence of Galvani, was amusing himself with the instrument, and noticed that convulsive motions took place in the muscles of one of the frogs, when touched by a piece of metal.

Madame Galvani, a lady of great intelligence, communicated it to her husband, who afterwards discovered the means of exciting these contractions at pleasure, by merely using two wires of different metals, independently of the electrical machine. Thus was discovered *Galvanism*, one of the most powerful modes of electrical action, and which has been the means of some of the most brilliant discoveries and achievements in chemical science.

There are other similar cases to these, which might be enumerated. It is in this way that many great inventions have been suggested.

Printing was, no doubt, first thought of from an impression made by a type, being turned to proper advantage by genius. "It is a mark of superior genius," says Mrs. Marcet, in her *Conversations on Natural Philosophy*, "to find matter for wonder, observation, and research, in circumstances which to the ordinary mind appear trivial, because they are common, and with which they are satisfied, because they are natural; without reflecting that nature is our grand

field of observation, that within it is contained our whole store of knowledge." The application of the power of electricity to machinery, so as to obtain any force, and which is said recently to have been done to some extent, will be one of the most brilliant achievements ever made in human science; and that of *perpetual motion*, in self-moving machines (if it can ever be effected) will far surpass every other discovery yet made.

DR. HOWARD.

Theological Notes and Queries.

OPEN COUNCIL.

[The utmost freedom of honest thought is permitted in this department. The reader must therefore use his own discriminating faculties, and the Editor must be allowed to claim freedom from responsibility.]

POWER ON A WOMAN'S HEAD.

REPLICANT. IN ANSWER TO QUERIST No. 6, p. 234. In answer to the above query, I think the following passage from Dr. Thomson's "The Land and the Book" gives a very clear and probable explanation of the passage:—"The word translated 'power,' is, perhaps, a mere symbolic title of the veil itself; nor is the figure altogether strange or unintelligible to an Oriental. The veil is, in fact, the beautiful lady's strength and defence. Modestly veiled, she appears everywhere and anywhere in perfect safety. She is held inviolate by a sensitive and most jealous sentiment, and no man insults her but at the risk of being torn in pieces by an infuriated mob; but without the veil she is a weak, helpless thing, at the mercy of every brute who may choose to abuse her. The veil,

therefore, is the virtuous woman's 'power,' and whenever she appears in public she ought to have this 'power on her head,' in church 'because of the angels,' that is, the ministers and messengers, as I suppose." It will be remembered that in the Book of the Revelation the word "angel" is continually used in this sense.

HIRONS.

REPLICANT. IN ANSWER TO QUERIST No. 6, p. 234. The veil of a woman was regarded among the Orientals as the symbol of the authority of the man over her, and was called by a name which signified power. The best interpreters understand the clause "because of the angels," to refer to the relation of angels to us in the kingdom of Christ. They are present at assemblies for worship, and the sense of this should fill us with awe, and render our behaviour decent and becoming.

CLEOPAS, CLEOPHAS, AND ALPHÆUS.

REPLICANT. In answer to QUERIST No. 7, p. 234. Cleopas, in Luke xxiv. 18, is probably a different person from Cleophas. Cleophas, or Clopas as it stands in the Greek of John xix. 25, is—strange as it may appear—the same name as Alphaeus, the two words being only variations of spelling the same Syriac name. Alphaeus was the father of James the Less.

PROPHECY.

REPLICANT. In answer to QUERIST No. 8, p. 234. Certainly not. A prophet was one who, under the influence of a Divine afflatus, spoke to the people in the name of God. What he said might or might not be prediction.

REDEMPTION.

REPLICANT. In answer to QUERIST No. 9, p. 234. The Apostle, in the passage in question, does not seem to be following the subjective but the objective order. Redemption, the deliverance of our souls, was virtually accomplished by Christ's death, which comes last, after His righteous obedience and sanctification of Himself. See John xvii. 19.

DEMONIACAL POSSESSION.

REPLICANT. In answer to QUERIST No. 10, p. 234. The possession by devils is directly represented in one passage at least (Matt. xii. 43—45) as involving moral turpitude. The same seems to be indirectly hinted by the name *unclean* spirits. It appears unlikely that a devil could obtain possession of a man unless he had gained previous advantage by the man's yielding to temptation. A devil, like a bad habit, might be resisted at first; but once admitted, could not be expelled. Having obtained so intimate connection with a man's nature, it is unlikely that a malignant spirit would

neglect to improve the opportunity by further corruption of the man. The woman in Luke vii. 37, is identified by many of the best interpreters with Mary of Magdala.

MINISTERS AND PRIESTS

REPLICANT. In answer to QUERIST No. 11, p. 234. Etymologically, *priest* is a very harmless word, being merely a contraction of *presbyter*. In the New Testament it is constantly used for *ιερεύς*, the minister of the legal ceremonies. But the name is adopted and ennobled by Christianity. All Christians are priests, 1 Pet. ii. 9; and the ministers with the rest. But as they are set apart for the ministry of the word and sacraments, there seems no sufficient reason why, on this account also, they should not be regarded as priests, or sacred persons, though the offering of legal sacrifices has ceased.

TREE OF LIFE.

REPLICANT. In answer to QUERIST No. 12, p. 234. We have no reason to believe that Adam was created immortal. On the contrary, Gen. iii. 19 seems to intimate that he was now to fall back on his natural mortality as a punishment for his sin. If, then, he was naturally mortal, and yet death was the punishment of his sin, we are obliged to conclude that his immortality in the garden was supernatural, a benefit super-added to him after creation. The passage Gen. iii. 22 seems to agree with this, by suggesting the supernatural means whereby his life would have been preserved, as if the tree in question were a kind of sacrament of immortality.

REGENERATION AND RENEWAL.

REPLICANT. In answer to QUERIST No. 13, p. 234. The word *παλιγγενεσία*, *new birth*, does

not occur in the Septuagint, although in Job xiv. 14, we have *πάλιν γένωμαι*, until *I again come into being*. It occurs only twice in the New Testament, in Matt. xix. 28, and Titus iii. 5. In the former passage the reference is to the beneficent change which will take place in the universe in the reign of the glorified Messiah. In the latter the reference is to individuals, who one by one are brought by the Holy Ghost into connexion with the Second Adam.

The other word *ἀνακαίνωσις*, renewal, is the gradual carrying out of the work which was commenced by *παλιγγενεσία*. It occurs in Titus iii. 5 in conjunction with *παλιγγενεσία*. In Rom. xii. 2 we read "he ye transformed" (a profound revolution) "by the *renewal* of your mind," the *νοῦς*, or intellect, which had been weakened and obscured. In Eph. iv. 23 we have the verb *ἀνανεώω*. Bishop Bull translates "be renewed *by* the Spirit of your mind," which Spirit

he understands of the Holy Ghost, "who immediately affects only the *νοῦς*." The *παλιγγενεσία* is the work of God alone; the other is the joint operation of God and man, which seems to be hinted by the use of the middle voice in the last passage, although *τῷ πνεύματι* immediately follows.

Queries to be answered.

14.—If the particles that compose the human body completely change every seven years, at the end of seventy years a man will have had no less than ten different bodies. How do you account for his old age and feebleness.—E.W.

15.—Which is the greater evil, and most condemned in the Bible, war or slavery?—T.G.

16.—What reason is there to believe that Christmas Day was the day on which Christ was born?—F.W.

Literary Notices.

[We hold it to be the duty of an Editor either to give an early notice of the books sent to him for remark, or to return them at once to the Publisher. It is unjust to praise worthless books: it is robbery to retain unnoticed ones.]

THE REVIEWER'S CANON.

In every work regard the author's end,
Since none can compass more than they intend.

LECTURES ON THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN. By CHARLES JOHN VAUGHAN, D.D., Vicar of Doncaster, Chancellor of York Cathedral, and Chaplain in Ordinary to the Queen. 2 Vols., Macmillan & Co.

THE Book of Revelation is one of those portions of Scripture which are omitted from the Table of Lessons in the English Prayer Book. A portion of it is occasionally appointed instead of a passage from the

Epistles in the Communion Service. This sparing use of the book was based, doubtless, upon reasons which are not far to seek. However edifying the book may be when in a measure understood, the compilers of the Tables of Lessons probably considered it undesirable to read to a popular audience, what, without exposition, must either be unintelligible or be exposed to misunderstanding. The difficulty of expounding it has very generally operated in the case of sober-minded preachers, to deter them from choosing texts from out of any portions, except the introduction and the conclusion. "For most Christians," says Dr. Vaughan, "the Revelation of St. John consists of five chapters, and three or four intermediate paragraphs. The three opening chapters, containing the Epistles to the Seven Churches, with their preface, and the two last chapters, containing the description of the heavenly state, with a few fragments from the 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 14th chapters, are practically for us the whole of that book, of which the first chapter says, *Blessed is he that readeth*, and the last chapter, *If any man shall take away from the words of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life*. Although the book cannot be at present perfectly understood, it may be to a very large extent, if investigated on correct principles. Then it yields edification in proportion, and perhaps is not inferior in this respect to any book of Scripture. Certainly its diction is unsurpassed in majesty, and so far as this can evidence a writing as Divine, it is surely done in connection with this book. No one can read it and fail to be affected by its power. However undesirable the reading of it before a popular audience without exposition, yet to make it a subject of a series of systematic popular expositions seems a course likely to ensure a high degree of usefulness.

The distinguishing character of these lectures will be best described by saying that they combine, in a very remarkable manner, sober and thorough exposition with powerful practical application. Therefore they are deeply interesting. They may be strongly recommended for private reading, and they are not less suitable, as a guide and exemplar, to those of the clergy who may be contemplating the delivery of expository discourses on the same book.

Dr. Vaughan considers the opening of the seals to be not openings of various portions of the rolls in succession, but necessary steps to the opening of the entire roll. Therefore the vision attendant on the opening of each seal is not something in the roll itself, but a vision concurrent with such opening. The *living creatures*, ζῶα, "represent the universe of animated creation." The author considers the voice as of thunder which proceeds from one of the living creatures at the opening of four of the seals, as addressed not to the Prophet but to the Saviour, and he agrees with Lachmann and Tischendorf in the omission of the words "and see" after "come," so that this word, thus standing alone, is expressive of the yearning of the creature for redemption. A very

remarkable correspondence is traced between the account of these visions and the predictions which are reported in Matt. xxiv. The seven trumpets are illustrated by reference to the capture of Jericho, at which, when on the seventh day, the procession had encircled the city seven times, there was a blast louder than at first, and the walls fell amid the acclamations of Israel. So the seven trumpets of the seven angels signify a succession of victories achieved by God on behalf of His Church, and when the seventh angel sounds, there are "great voices in heaven," announcing the triumph of Christ over the kingdoms of this world. The three great enemies of Christ and His Church are the Dragon, the Beast and the other Beast, or the Devil, the World, and Worldly-wisdom. The author refrains from attempting to interpret the Number of the Beast, only hinting that the imperfect 6, repeated thrice, 666, may, as a symbol of the false pretence of the world, be opposed to the full and perfect 12, which with its multiples so often appears as the signal of the Church—12 stars, 2×12 elders, 12×12 thousand redeemed from the earth. The judgments inflicted by the angels with the phials, or bowls of libation, *φιάλια*, are for the overthrow of the Beast. Babylon, being at first Rome, then the Church of Rome as partaking of Babylonian sins, may now be any country or church, so far as it is characterized by the same.

The thousand years of Satan's confinement to the abyss are not to be understood literally, but denote the whole space between the ascension and that latest conflict, be it what it may, which will be the immediate precursor of the second advent. The period that is now, is therefore the period of the reign of Christ and of His saints with Him. The first resurrection is the awakening from the death of the body to the life of the soul, the Christian's near future; and his more remote prospect is the resurrection of the body. "The rest of the dead lived not," in that sense of life which is alone the Gospel's and the Christian's sense, 'till the thousand years be finished.' "

Space forbids expansion, and we end with cordial and emphatic commendation of a work which will be regarded by competent judges as an important addition to the sacred literature of our country. Such readers as expect the gratification of a vain curiosity, by attempts at the prediction of particular events, will be disappointed. But those who delight in "words of truth and soberness," in interpretation which is at once reverent and acute in fervid appeals to the conscience and the heart, embodied often in strains of genuine Christian eloquence, will find them here. Let not such be discouraged from the perusal by any former disgust, occasioned by the reveries over this mysterious book, which may have proceeded from the over-heated brain of the fanatic or still worse, by the quackeries of the pretended prophet, which we fear have sometimes defiled and obscured its pages. Dr. Vaughan is a scholar, a sound philosopher, and an orthodox divine.

FIRST LESSONS IN THE LIFE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, FOR FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS. By CHARLES WILLS, M.A. London: Jackson, Walford & Hodder.

THE Life of Christ is the substance of true theology, and the life-giving power of soul. He who presents this soul-quickenng biography to others, in the most easily appreciable form, is the best Gospel teacher, and renders the highest spiritual service to his race. This is what the talented and scholarly clergyman, who is the author of this little work, has aimed to accomplish in his pages. The work is to aid teachers in schools and families in their endeavors to impart to children a vivid impression of the Life of Jesus. It does not put the question into the teacher's mouth, and thus make him a mere parrot, but allows his mind free play to construct the form, and select the language of the interrogations himself; at the same time answering in terms, clear and concise, that bring out the grand subject. The work should be in the hands of every Christian catechist.

VITAL QUESTIONS. Six Lectures, by Rev. FREDERICK FOX THOMAS, Torquay. London: Hamilton, Adams, & Co.

THE questions which the author considers vital, and of which he treats, are the following:—Shall I be indifferent to the salvation of my soul? How can I escape eternal ruin? How can I become holy? Can I have evidence that I am saved? What can I do for Jesus? Where will be my eternal abode? These questions are discussed in the popularly evangelical strain, and with a force of great earnestness. The author in every sentence from first to last, is bent on making saving impressions on souls. He does not for a moment turn aside to look for anything else, or introduce a passage for any other purpose. Practically his motto is, "This one thing I do." Each discourse abounds with anecdotes; some that are heart-stirring with spiritual significance, and not a few told with considerable appositeness. The Tract Society might do well to procure the copyright of this work, and circulate it by thousands.

THE OLD LIEUTENANT AND HIS SON. By Rev. NORMAN MACLEOD, D.D. London: Alexander Strahan & Co. As this story appeared in *Good Words*, of which the talented author is the editor, its merits are too well known to require our comments or characterizations. Every drop that falls from the pen of Dr. Macleod is sure to be warm with noblest sentiments, and brilliant with undoubted genius. THE PROGRESSIONIST. Edited by Rev. G. B. PORTEUS. London: F. Pitman. This is a new periodical, full of freshness and progress. May its career be prosperous and long. TALES ABOUT THE SEA. By PETER PARLEY. London: William Tegg. A delightful and instructive book for the young, in every way worthy of the pen of Old Peter Parley.



A HOMILY

ON

Man's Cry for Fellowship with God.

"Oh that I knew where I might find him!"—Job xxiii. 3.

"Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us."—John xiv. 8.

AN accurate and full delineation of the fitness of the Gospel to the spiritual constitution of man, would supply an evidence in favor of its Divinity, of a force, unequalled in any existing theological literature. Several such delineations have been attempted, with more or less ability, and, so far as they succeed, they furnish the best book-evidences we have. The congruity of the essential truths of the written Word with the faculties and sentiments of the human soul, goes a great way towards the demonstration of the Divinity of that Word. Albeit, there is, we think, a more conclusive evidence even than this, which may be reached, and which the sceptical tendencies of the age seem to demand. It is that which will be found in the exquisite fitness of the Bible to answer all the profoundest *cravings of the human heart*—cravings which exist in man under all dispensations, in all ages, climes, and stages of human development. We have long watched the more philosophic portion of the religious press, awaiting with earnestness the advent of such a production. It is an undoubted desideratum. The adaptation of the Bible to the spiritual faculties and sentiments of the soul is unquestionably an evidence of considerable potency; but the *necessity* of the Bible to meet those deep

and universal *longings* of the heart, which work the mental faculties and sway the emotions, yields an argument whose force is unequalled and well-nigh resistless. The adaptation of a system to humanity is one thing, the necessity of it is another. There may be adaptation where there is not Divinity; but where there is a *necessity* to man's spiritual life, a question of its Divinity is scarcely admissible.

It is to an attempt at the development of this necessity, that I shall give myself in a few homilies.* Though painfully conscious of my insufficiency for the task, my impression of the need emboldens me in the effort. Urgency justifies acts of daring which in other circumstances might be fairly regarded as culpably presumptuous. If I can approximate, in any measure, even to my own ideal of the work required, I may effect something in placing the Divinity of the Bible in the irresistible evidence of human conscience.

That there are certain cravings in man's spiritual nature, wide as the race, deep as the deepest springs of being, and restless as the sea, will become undebatably obvious as we advance in our path of inquiry. The first of these to which I shall call attention is that expressed in our text by the patriarch of Uz, and by Philip, the disciple of Christ. It is a craving after fellowship with God; it is a quenchless thirst for communion with the Living One. The questions for solution are not those of the *speculative intellect*, but of the deep and ever-anxious *heart* of the world. Of course, the being of God is implied in this longing—underlies it, is the spring of it. The being of a God requires no logic proof; it is written in legible and imperishable characters in the constitution of the human soul.

* The Course will include such subjects as the following:—"The World's Cry for the Solution of the Felt Distance of its Maker." "The World's Cry for a Knowledge of the Supreme Law of Life." "The World's Cry for the True Method of Making Reparation for the Guilty Past." "The World's Cry for a Plan by which to Deliver Itself from its Moral and Natural Evils." "The World's Cry concerning the Destiny of the Dead." "The World's Cry concerning the Ultimate Issue of all Human Things," &c., &c.

"I deny," says Cousin, the great French philosopher, "that there are people who have no idea of a God." So do I.* It is true that the judgments of men differ widely, and have ever differed, as to who the true God is ; they figure Him in different images, they ascribe to Him different attributes, and they call Him by different names ; but their belief in Him is accordant, and their craving for fellowship with Him is the same, the world and ages through. The soul-attitude of the race is that of a suppliant. Man is constitutionally prayerful. The heart of the world is on its knees ; its face is upturned to the heavens, and its cry is—"Oh, that I knew where I might find him !" Men, everywhere and for ever, feel after Him, if haply they may find Him. The philosophy of all the divinities, temples and priesthood, of ancient and modern heathendom, is found in this deep longing of the soul for fellowship with God.

"Humanity," says Edmund de Pressenssée, in his "Religions before Christ," "taken as a whole, has never erred in its mode of propounding the religious problem. It has ever held religion to be not a mere communication of ideas concerning the divinity, but a solemn effort to reunite the broken bond between heaven and earth, to establish an effectual union between man and God. The religions of the ancient world all had presentiments of this union, and strove to realize it. In the East it manifested itself under the form of frequent incarnations ; in the West, in the apotheoses. In the East, it is the divinity that stoops to man ; in the West, humanity rises to the divinity ; but neither in India, nor in Greece, was the real union between man and God effected. In India, incarnation was but illusory, and was, to borrow the expression of *Pouranmus*, 'but a kind of mask with which the friendly divinity invested himself, like an actor who puts on a costume to perform a part.' " If we consider attentively, we shall find that these repeated incarnations were striking proofs of the contempt which this pantheistic and ascetic religion professed for the human

* See "Homilist," II. Vol., I Series, p. 81.

individual, which was, in its eyes, but an evanescent form of an absolute being. Brahma, or Vishnou, alone possesses real existence. The worshipper seeks to become merged in them, and to utterly annihilate the human element. In Greece, it is the divine element which is compromised. Humanity in its natural state is declared to be divine, if adored in its grandeur; it is so likewise in its passions and in its weaknesses. The Olympian god is but a hero placed beside an altar. Thus we see that the religious problem is far from being solved. Efforts were made to simplify it by reducing all to a factitious unit, alternately ignoring either the divine or the human side. In India, we find all is one vast divinity, devouring the universe which it creates and destroys at the same time. In Greece, we find nothing but one presumptuous humanity, trying to cheat, by adoration of itself, its own infinite wants; and hiding its short-comings under the graceful veil of Polytheism. Nevertheless, and in spite of these radical imperfections, the aim and endeavor of those religions of the East and West, even under their grossest myths, was the union of divinity with humanity.

Now, is there anything suited to satisfy this craving, or is the longing something unlike any other creature desire, of which we have any knowledge, left to gnaw the heart and burn the soul without any provision whatever? We can only determine this question by ascertaining what kind of provision are equal to the demand. We think that the provision must involve a three-fold manifestation of God—a *personal*, a *benevolent*, and a *propitiable*.

I. The provision to satisfy this longing of the soul must involve a PERSONAL MANIFESTATION OF GOD TO THE SOUL. It is not for some *thing*, though grand and beautiful as the magnificent universe itself, that the soul cries after. It is for a *person*—for an existence endowed with the personal attributes of knowledge, love, will, reciprocity. Pantheism may gratify the instinct of the speculative, or the sentiment of the poetic; but it meets not this profoundest craving of

our nature. It may seem very intellectual and poetic to talk of God as the great ocean of which all other existences are but billows rising out of it, and breaking into its abysses again ; as the one life of which the universe is the ever-changing branch and leaf ; as the one underlying substance of which all else is but ever-changing vesture. But all this is no more suited to meet this deep craving of the soul, than the strain of the musician the wants of a hungry man. The soul wants a personal God ; one to whom we can speak, in whom we can confide, and who will reciprocate the deepest sentiments of our nature.

II. The provision to satisfy this longing, must, moreover, involve a BENEVOLENT MANIFESTATION OF GOD TO THE SOUL. The soul would never cry for fellowship with a being of mere almighty force, or of mere all-knowing intellect ; a being without emotions—passionless, and heartless. Still less will it crave for fellowship with a malevolent being, one who found his pleasure in the misery of his creatures. From such an one it would recoil with loathing and with horror. For an unemotional God it has no affinity ; for a malevolent one it has a dread. It craves for One that is kind and loving, One on whom it can put its supreme affection, and place its undoubted trust. Its cry is for the *Father* ; nothing else will do.

III. The provision to satisfy this longing must involve, still further, a PROPITIABLE MANIFESTATION OF GOD TO THE SOUL. A sense of sin presses heavily on the race. Even the savage feels that he has offended the Great Spirit, and he is anxious to propitiate Him. "O wretched man that I am !" is the moral groan of all. The sacrifices, pilgrimages, self-inflicted tortures, priesthoods, all express the deep feeling which the world has—that it has offended its Maker. Now, a propitiable manifestation it must have, in order to satisfy its longing. Mere benevolence will not do. He may be benevolent and yet not propitiable ; nay, benevolence in some cases may demand implacability. Would the soul cry for fellowship with an unappeasable deity ? It is not possible.

Now if such a threefold manifestation of God is *necessary* to satisfy this deep spiritual craving of humanity, the question is—Does the Bible furnish such a manifestation? It would be easy to show, that man, by the light of nature, has failed to discover such manifestation of the Deity. Poor human reason, through the thick mists of depraved passions and moral remorse, has scarcely seen any personal deity, save one that is malevolent and unappeasably wrathful. Nay, it has seen not one divinity, but many, and these divinities amongst the most vile and contemptible of objects. But our point is not whether nature supplies the provision, but does the Bible do so? If so, it meets the greatest *necessity* of human nature.

Does it give a *personal* God? Take a specimen of its revelations on the point. "I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God." (Isa. xlv. 6.) Again: "I am the Lord; and there is none else. I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me." (Isa. xlv. 18; Deut. xxxii. 39.) Again: "Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." (Rom. xi. 36.) "I AM THAT I AM. This is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." (Exod. iii. 14, 15.) But it is not in mere *language* that His personality is announced, it is in a *living history*—the history of Christ. "Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." (1 Tim. iii. 16.) Christ is "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person." (Heb. i. 3.) The God of the Bible is a personal God.

Does it give a *benevolent* God? Take, again, a specimen of its revelations on this point. "The Lord is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works." (Ps. cxlv. 9.) "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." (Ps. ciii. 13.) "The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing." (Ps. cxlv. 15, 16.) "Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless

he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." (Acts xiv. 16, 17.) Again: GOD IS LOVE.

Does it give a *propitiable* God? Here is the revelation: "And the LORD descended in the cloud, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin. (Exod. xxxiv. 5—7.) Again: "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." (Isaiah lvii. 15.) And again: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah lv. 7—9.) Again: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.)

Such, then, is the God of the Bible—the very God after whom the soul of humanity has been ever craving. "Oh that I knew where I might find him?" To the millions who cry out this question, we hold up the Bible and say, "Here He is." The very God you seek is here. "Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us." O! ye wandering prodigals from your Father's house, here is the very Father whom you seek, overflowing with love, and almighty to help you. In this blessed Book you have a solution to the profoundest questions of your nature—a solution which the Zoroasters, the Confuciuses, and the Platos sought for in vain. The Bible meets the deepest longings, and matches the loftiest aspirations of the soul. All who have ever rightly sought for God here, have exclaimed with rapture, "This is our God, we have waited for him."

A Homiletic Glance at the Acts of the Apostles.

Able expositions of the ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, describing the manners, customs, and localities described by the inspired writers ; also interpreting their words, and harmonizing their formal discrepancies, are, happily, not wanting amongst us. But the eduction of its widest truths and highest suggestions is still a felt desideratum. To some attempt at the work we devote these pages. We gratefully avail ourselves of all exegetical helps within our reach ; but to occupy our limited space with any lengthened archæological, geographical, or philological remarks, would be to miss our aim ; which is not to make bare the mechanical process of the study of Scripture, but to reveal its spiritual results.

SECTION FOURTH.—Acts i. 12—14.

“ Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day’s journey. And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.”—Acts i. 12—14.

SUBJECT :—*The First Prayer Meeting after Christ’s Ascension.*

THERE are three things in this first prayer meeting of the disciples, after Christ’s departure to heaven, that claim special attention :—its *scene*, its *attendance*, and its *spirit*.

I. The SCENE of this first prayer meeting. “ Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day’s journey.” “ A sabbath day’s journey” was a distance of seven stadia, or furlongs, making a little less than one of our miles. The measure is supposed to have been borrowed from the space between the people and the ark when they passed over

Jordan. (Joshua iii. 4). The sabbath day's journey means a short distance. The space they had to walk, therefore, from Bethany, the eastern side of Olivet, to Jerusalem, was short ; yet, with what thoughts and feelings they trod that mile, we are not told. Imagination may suggest much that may be touching, though not true.

Let us not be wise above what is written. "They went up into an upper room." This was the scene of their devotion. "Upper room" does not mean a room above the lower floor, much less a garret or inferior apartment, but one comparatively spacious—reserved both in Greek and Jewish houses for the use of guests, or for unusual occasions. It is not likely that this room was in the temple. The probability is that it was the chamber where our Lord ate the Passover, and where the apostles appear to have assembled on the evening of the resurrection ; it was a room, therefore, full of hallowed associations to them.*

Now, in immediately returning to Jerusalem, they showed at once their *obedience to Christ*, and the *fearlessness of their faith*. Their Master had commanded them to tarry at Jerusalem until they should receive the promise of their Father. In promptly retiring thither, therefore, they were acting in loyalty to His will. Their fearless faith, too, was seen in this. Jerusalem was the home of those who insulted, persecuted, tortured, murdered their Master. Every street was filled with those who execrated the name of Jesus of Nazareth. It was nobly courageous, therefore, for those poor disciples to hold their first meeting there, now that their great Protector and Lord had left them.

II. The ATTENDANCE at this first prayer meeting. There "abode both Peter, and James, and John, &c." The word "abode" does not mean that this room was their permanent residence, but was the place where they were waiting the

* Upper rooms were a kind of domestic chapels in every house. There they assembled to read the law and to transact religious affairs.—Vitrunga I. i. 6.

advent of the Spirit. The remarks of Dr. Alexander upon this Apostolic roll are so intelligent and discriminative that we invite attention to them.*

* "We have then, a catalogue of the apostles, introduced, as some suppose, because they were now re-assembled and re-organized after their dispersion. (Matt. xxvi. 56. Mark xiv. 50). But besides that, they had several times met since that defection. (Matt. xxviii. 16. Mark xvi. 14. Luke xxiv. 36. John xx. 19—26, xxiv. 14). A distinct enumeration of their names would have been natural, not to say necessary, as an introduction to the apostolic history. This is the fourth list contained in the New Testament (Compare Matt. x. 2—4. Mark iii. 16—19. Luke vi. 14—16), and in some points different from all the rest. Although no two of these catalogues agree precisely in the order of the names, they may all be divided into three quarterions, which are never interchanged, and the leading names of which are the same in all. Thus, the first is always Peter, the fifth Philip, the ninth James, the son of Alphæus, and the twelfth Judas Iscariot. Another difference is, that Matthew and Luke's Gospels give the names in pairs, or two and two, while Mark enumerates them singly, and the list before us follows both these methods one after the other. A third distinction is, that this list adds no titles or description to the leading names, but only to those near the end. *Both Peter*, like a similar expression in v. 8, means not only Peter, but the others also. This, with his uniform position at the head of the list, marks distinctly his priority, not as a superior in rank and office, but as a representative and spokesman of the rest, like the foreman of a jury, or the chairman of a large committee. This priority, which often incidentally appears throughout the Gospel History (*e. g.* Matt. xv. 15, xvi. 16, 17—24, xviii. 21, xix. 27. Mark x. 28, xi. 21. Luke viii. 45, xii. 41, xviii. 28, xxii. 32, 33. John vi. 68, xiii. 24), so far from amounting to a primacy or permanent superiority, was less an advantage to himself than a convenience to his brethren, and indeed, occasioned some of his most serious errors and severest trials. (See Matt. xvi. 16—22, xxvi. 33, 51, 58. Mark viii. 32, xiv. 29, 47, 54, 66. Luke xxii. 34, 50, 55. John xiii. 8, 36, 37, xviii. 10, 11, 16). It is now a very general belief that the affecting scene in John xxi. 15—17, was Peter's restoration to the apostleship, from which he had fallen for a time by the denial of his Master; the three questions and injunctions there recorded corresponding to his three acts of apostasy. Be this as it may, we find him here resuming the position which he occupied before, and is to occupy throughout a large part of the present history. The other names are all familiar from the Gospels. *James and John*, the sons of Zebedee, and sons of thunder, early called to be disciples and apostles (Matt. iv. 21, x. 2. Mark i. 19, 29, iii. 17. Luke v. 10, vi. 14),

The roll of names here given reminds us of:—

First: *The sociality of Christ's system.* What brought them together? A community of feeling and purpose and, with Peter, frequently distinguished from the rest as confidential servants and companions of our Saviour (Matt. xvii. 1. Mark v. 37, ix. 2, xiii. 3. Luke viii. 51), while John was admitted to a still more intimate and tender friendship. (John xiii. 23, xix. 26, xxi. 7, 20). Traits of their character appear in Mark x. 35—41. Luke ix. 52—56. *Andrew*, the brother of Simon Peter, and placed next to him by Mark, but here postponed to the two sons of Zebedee. On one or two occasions in the Gospel history, we find him incidentally referred to, as attending on the Master and conversing with him. (Matt. iv. 18, vi. 8, xii. 22). The same thing may be said of *Philip*, his townsman and associate. (Matt. x. 3, Mark iii. 18. Luke vi. 14. John i. 14—44, vi. 5—7, xii. 21, 22, xiv. 8, 9). It is worthy of remark, that these two apostles are known only by Greek names, though, according to the custom of the age, they may have had Hebrew ones besides. *Thomas*, elsewhere surnamed *Didymus*, (the twin) a Greek translation of his Armenic name. He also appears now and then in close attendance on his Master, and peculiarly devoted to Him, although chiefly remembered for refusing to believe that Christ was risen from the dead until assured of it by ocular inspection (John xi. 16, xiv. 5, xx. 24—29, xxi. 2). *Bartholomew* is commonly supposed to be the same with the *Nathanael* of John's Gospel, chiefly because it seems improbable that one so highly honored by the Saviour, and so intimately known to the apostles, should be excluded from their number, while a person otherwise unknown was admitted to it (See John i. 46—50, xxi. 2). *Matthew*, the Publican, also called *Levi*, and the Son of *Alphæus*, whose vocation and first intercourse with Christ are recorded by himself and others (See Matt. ix. 9, x. 3. Mark ii. 14, iii. 18. Luke v. 27—29, vi. 15). *James of Alphæus*, i.e., as is commonly supposed, his son; while, on the other hand, *Judas of James* is no less generally understood to mean his brother, although some assume the same ellipsis in both places, and make Jude the son of a James otherwise unknown. By comparing the evangelists, it seems that Jude, or Judas not Iscariot, was also called *Lebbeus*, or *Thaddæus* (See Matt. x. 3, Mark iii. 18, Luke vi. 16, John xiv. 22). Between James and John, appears the name of *Simon*, surnamed here *Zelotes*, in reference either to his ardent temper, or to his previous connection with the party of the Zealots, whose fanatical zeal ultimately caused the downfall of the Jewish State, and of whose organized existence there are traces even in the book before us. *Zelotes* seems to be the Greek translation, as *Canaanites* is the Greek form of an Armenic name denoting Zealot. The Greek word for *Canaanite* is altogether different. The meaning of *Canaite* (inhabitant of Cana) rests upon another reading (See Matt. x. 4, Mark iii. 18, Luke vi. 15.)"

awakened by One in whom all their hearts centred. If you would unite men in social affection, you must get them to love supremely your common object. Souls can never be brought into close sympathetic contact, but by means of objects which they love in common. Christianity alone supplies an object that all hearts can love supremely; and, therefore, of all systems in the world it is the most social. The roll reminds us of:—

Secondly : *The triumph of grace.* These disciples had all been scattered by the crucifixion. That event so shocked and shattered their faith, that they all forsook Him and fled; but here we find them restored again to Christian feeling and fellowship. There are here some persons whose presence on this occasion delights us much. Peter, who thrice denied his Master, is here, and in his right mind. Incredulous Thomas, too, who resolved not to believe, has had his faith established and is present. Mary, the mother of Jesus, is here. A sword had pierced her heart, and she had passed through unknown agonies of soul. This is the last time her name is mentioned in the holy book, and she is not mentioned with any idolatrous homage, but spoken of simply as one of the disciples of Christ. What became of her afterwards is not known. One old tradition says she died early in Jerusalem, and another says she accompanied John to Ephesus, and lived to an advanced age. Other women, too, are mentioned; their names are not given. Perhaps some of the wives of the Apostles were there, for some of them were married. (Matt. viii. 14.—1 Cor. ix. 5). Mary Magdalene, and other women who were last at His cross, and earliest at His grave, were in all probability there. Christianity has raised woman to her present position in the civilized world, and woman has ever proved the most ardent and loyal in her love to the system that has made her what she is. This little assembly truly demonstrates the triumphant power of grace. This roll reminds us of:—

Thirdly : *The ravages of sin.* We discover, in looking at the list, that there is one of the apostles absent. Where is

Judas ? He was present at the Passover with all the brother names here given—present, perhaps, in this very same upper room. But where is he now ? There is a Judas here, it is true, but it is not Judas Iscariot. Where is he ? We know the sad story of this miserable man, and his absence on this occasion preaches a terrible homily concerning the ravages of sin.

III. The SPIRIT of this first prayer meeting : “These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication.” These words teach us that there was a spirit of *union* and *perseverance* in their prayers.

First : There was a spirit of *union*.—“They continued with one accord.” They were not assembled together in the same place, and for the the same purpose, but there was a great unanimity of sentiment amongst them. They agreed in the blessings they sought, and in the mode of seeking them. A common desire ruled them all.

Secondly : There was a spirit of *perseverance* in the prayers : “they continued.” The Greek verb, here used, strictly denotes personal attendance, sticking close to any thing or person, particularly that of a superior ; and is then transferred to perseverance in duty, such as that of public worship, and particularly of prayer. The parable of the unjust judge is a striking illustration of the importance of perseverance in prayer.

Would that all prayer meetings agreed in their unanimity and perseverance with this, the first prayer meeting after Christ’s ascension. We must go back to Apostolic times for our models of devotion.



Germs of Thought.

MEMORABLE NIGHTS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

No. II.

SUBJECT :—*The Truth of God, and the Trial of its Friends.*

“And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word : for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt : and was there until the death of Herod : that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.”—Matt. ii. 13—15.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Thirtieth.

THIS chapter contains no less than four old types of modern classes ;—those who earnestly seek the truth, the Magi ;—those who rest in the letter of the truth, the Scribes and the Pharisees ;—those who are fearfully alarmed at the truth, Herod ;—and those who are the affectionate guardians of the truth, Mary and Joseph.* We shall take this incident to illustrate two things—*the truth of God, and the trial of its friends.*

I. THE TRUTH OF GOD. The birth of Christ was the birth of Divine Truth into the world. It was truth incarnating itself in human nature, to live in that nature, and show itself through that nature from infancy to manhood. Christ was the Truth ; truth on earth in its most palpable, powerful, and perfect form. The passage suggests three things concerning this truth.

First : *Earth's opposition to this truth.* It is said that

* See “Homilist,” Vol. I., p. 108.

"when Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him." Strange fact this, a king in trouble; stranger still, in trouble about the birth of a babe; and most strange, to be in trouble about the birth of Him who came to bless the world. The fact was, Herod hated the light and dreaded it. He knew that his own position was false, and his character corrupt, and that truth would frown on him; and hence he sought to destroy it in its birth. "Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof." The corrupt world has ever hated the truth, and, like Herod, is ever anxious to destroy it. Truth condemns its spirit and its aims. The world is ever ready to vote against truth, ever ready to banish it from its sphere. The words suggest—

Secondly: *Heaven's interest in the truth.* "The angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother," &c. Heaven knew all that was going on in the heart of Herod, knew his determination in reference to the child Jesus, and thus frustrated his malignant intentions. Whatever men may feel about truth, however much the world's little magnates may disregard or despise it, it is the only thing on earth in which angels feel an interest. Crowns and sceptres and the pageantry of courts are empty puerilities to the eye of an angel. It is truth, in its rise, its struggles, its triumphs and defeats, that interests him. The words suggest—

Thirdly: *Man's guardianship of the truth.* Whilst the world abounds with enemies to the truth, there are a few who are its true guardians. Joseph and Mary are a type of these. How anxious were they for the protection of the child Jesus! In their guardianship two things were observable. (1) They were inspired by genuine affection. They loved that child with more than the ordinary affection of parents. Those only are true guardians of the truth who love it supremely. (2) They followed Divine direction.

They moved as the angel of the Lord counselled them. There are some who would be the guardians of the truth, who follow not the direction of heaven in the matter. Fraud and violence have too often characterized their efforts.

II. THE TRIAL OF ITS FRIENDS. Who can estimate the trial of Joseph and Mary now? The life of that sweet babe, concerning whom they had not only the ardent affections of parents, but such mystic spiritual impressions as had excited their religious feelings to a point of strange interest, was threatened by Herod. The following thoughts are suggested by their trial.

First: *That the greatest trials of the good often spring from the greatest blessings.* What a blessing was this babe! Never before were parents honored with such a child as this—never since. That child, when grown up, would become more than the best of men, more than the wisest of sages, more than the greatest of heroes, more than the mightiest of monarchs,—the Destroyer of death, the Conqueror of evil, the Saviour of the world. Yet, from this blessing springs the agony of this hour. It is often so. It was so with Abraham. What a blessing was Isaac to him! yet, what agony of feeling sprang out of it, when, with knife in hand, he was going to sacrifice him! It is often so, even in our own experience. Those things which are to us the greatest blessings, become not unfrequently to us our greatest trials.

Secondly: *That the greatest trials of the good often fit the mind for Divine communications.* The danger which threatened the holy child became the one dominant subject in Joseph's mind; it absorbed all other thoughts; it possessed him as a terrible spirit. At night on his bed it haunted him with terrible visions. Now it was to his mind, thus painfully exercised and highly excited, that communications from heaven were made. "The angel of the Lord appeareth to him in a dream." It may be laid down as a principle, that the more vividly and deeply the soul is stirred within us, the more prepared we are for influences from the

spirit world. It was so when Hagar in the wilderness felt her awful desolation, and the terrible dread of losing her child Ishmael, when her spirit was stirred with emotions the most exciting to her nature, that "the angel of God called to her out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is." It was at the point when Joshua's mind was roused to the very highest pitch with his tremendous responsibilities, as the exterminator of the Canaanites and the leader of the chosen people, that he saw the angel of the Lord over against Jericho with the sword drawn in his hand. So with Jacob; so with Moses; so with Gideon; so with Peter; so with John in Patmos; so with the apostles and many others. The fact seems to be this: the more the spiritual within us is woke up, the more intense the excitability of its sentiments and faculties, the closer it is to the voices and visions of the spiritual world.

Thirdly: *The greatest trials of the good are removed by following the Divine direction.* "When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt." Egypt was the best, if not the only place of refuge. It was near the southern frontier of Judea; a large and more liberal Jewish community dwelt there; it was under the protection of a civilized government; and well-known roads led through the desert into it. Tradition marks out the route which Joseph took into Egypt. It was by the way of Hebron, Gaza, and the desert. At Hebron is still pointed out the hill where the family rested at night, and a similar one at Gaza. Probably a fortnight was occupied in the journey. The place of their sojourn in Egypt was according to tradition the village Metareyeh, not far from the city Hieropolis, on the way to Cairo. An old sycamore is still shown as that under which they rested in their journey.* How long they remained in Egypt is not known; some say three, some eight years. There, however, He was safe; there He remained until Herod, who sought His life, died, and until an angel again from

* See "Life of our Lord upon the Earth," Rev. Samuel J. Andrews, p. 88.

heaven descended to tell him when and whither to go again. He was delivered out of this trial by following the directions of heaven, and thus, only, can any be delivered out of their afflictions and distresses. Great are the trials of our race ; evils, like mountains, rest upon the heart of the world, and the groan of anguish is deep, long, and loud. "Oh earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord !" Follow the directions of Heaven, and thy mountain of trials shall melt like wax in the presence of the Lord.

In conclusion, the subject forces upon us two questions. First : *What is your conduct in relation to truth ?* Are you, like Herod, afraid of it ? When it seems to be rising up in your family or in your business, are you troubled about it, lest it should interfere with your sinful pleasures or dishonest ways ? Would you destroy it, if you could, when it comes into collision with the depravities of your heart and life ? Many feel so. There are many Herods now, many who would kill the young child ; but their conduct is as foolish as it is wicked, foolish because all efforts to crush truth are futile. Heaven is interested in it, and there are men on earth who are its Divine guardians. Herod fulfilled his iniquitous course, died, and left a name of infamy for the execration of mankind ; but the Babe he sought to murder, grew to manhood, leavened His age with His doctrines, and bequeathed a system that shall one day secure for Him the many crowns of the world. Thus it must ever be. Men may seek to crush truth as it is born into their domains ; but there is a God watching over its cradle, there is a quenchless immortality in its infant struggles. All efforts to destroy it are futile. Thou mightest as well endeavor to dry up the Atlantic, or quench the everlasting stars, as to destroy truth. Secondly : *What is your conduct in relation to trial ?* You have trials, I have no doubt. Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards. But how do you act in relation to them ? Do you brood over them, and thus increase their force over you ? Do you parade them before your neighbours in order to enlist their sympathy and get them to pity you as a

martyr? Do you murmur under them, and thus rebel against your Maker? Or do you, like the old Stoics, endeavor to reason yourself into a state of mind that will make you dead to all calamities? In all such conduct there is impiety and irrationality combined. There is but one method of relief. Follow the Divine direction; unless you do this, your trials will grow, and multiply, and blacken until they shall become an intolerable hell. As Mary and Joseph went down to Egypt with their anxious charge, flee you to the Cross with all your sorrows and cares. Christ Himself invites you. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," &c.



MEMORABLE NIGHTS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

No. III.

SUBJECT:—*Nicodemus Coming to Christ at Night; or, the Gospel School.*

"There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our

witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."—John iii. 1—17.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Thirty-first.

A MEMORABLE night truly was this in which this Nicodemus appeared before Christ—memorable on account of the insight it gives us into that grand school which Christ established for the spiritual culture of the world. There are three things that claim our attention in relation to this school, as it appears before us in these verses:—*The distinguished student who appeared in it; the glorious Master who presided over it; and the momentous lessons which were taught in it.*

I. THE DISTINGUISHED STUDENT WHO APPEARED IN THE GOSPEL SCHOOL THIS NIGHT. With the exception of two or three other short references to Nicodemus in the Gospels, the only information we have of him is in this short narrative. The following things concerning him are worthy of notice.

First: *His religious sect.* He was a Pharisee. Of all religious sects that prevailed amongst the Jews, that of the Pharisees was the most proud, sanctimonious, exclusive and influential. John the Baptist had denounced them as a "generation of vipers," &c., Christ had warned His disciples against the leaven of their influence, and thundered at them eight tremendous WOES. They were the leading antagonists to the Son of God. To this sect Nicodemus belonged. It is very interesting to see a man breaking away from the shackles of a bigoted party in quest of truth elsewhere. Observe—

Secondly: *His civil position.* "He was a ruler of the

Jews ;” one of the members of the Jewish Sanhedrim, the great council of the nation. He was one of the leading men of his age in Jerusalem. This, too, is interesting. It is a very refreshing sight—a man invested with civil authority, seeking religious knowledge at the hands of a reputed son of a carpenter. Observe—

Thirdly : *His respectful behaviour.* “ Rabbi,” &c. This was a title of respect, and in some places is rendered “ Master.” He recognized in Christ a great teacher, and he approaches Him with the utmost deference, and addresses Him, “ Rabbi.” Observe—

Fourthly : *His evident sincerity.* He acknowledges at once his conviction of the Divinity of Christ’s mission : “ We know that thou art a teacher come from God,” &c. As if he had said—“ There is a general conviction on this point ; I partake of the conviction.” He gives the ground of his own conviction. “ For no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him.” The fact of these miracles was undoubted, their greatness unequalled, and their authorship was something more than human. “ No man can do these miracles,” &c. Observe—

Fifthly : *His moral timidity.* He came by *night* for fear of the Jews. He was evidently a timid man. The question which he put in the council—“ Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doeth ?” (John vii. 50.)—the fact also that he came to Pilate secretly, to render respect to the body of Christ, shows that he lacked moral courage. (John xix. 39.) Whilst his love for truth was strong enough to impel him, in spite of his religious sect and his official position, to seek an interview with Christ—his timidity would not allow him to go in the open day, but led him to choose the *night*.

Such is the man we find entering the Gospel School this night. Certainly no ordinary inquirer, no common student.

II. THE GLORIOUS MASTER WHO PRESIDED OVER THE GOSPEL SCHOOL THIS NIGHT. Christ, the Founder and Head

of the Gospel School, was present in person, and dealt *directly* with this distinguished inquirer. There are three things which we discover in connexion with Christ as the Great Teacher this night, indicative of His transcendent greatness.

First : *The spirit He exemplifies.* Here was the spirit of *faithfulness*. In reply to the inquirer, there is no circumlocution, no temporizing, no attempt to make truth palatable, but with the abruptness of a spirit fired with truth, He says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Words suited to shake his Pharisaism to its foundations. Here is *earnestness*, too ; the necessity of the change he thrice repeats in words of fire. Here is *certitude*—"We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen." Here is a consciousness of absolute knowledge—"What I say I know, not by the testimony of others, not by the deduction of a fallible reason, but as a matter of direct vision from my Father." Christ said what He *knew* to be the truth ; His doctrines were as real to Him as His own existence. Another thing indicative of His transcendent greatness is—

Secondly : *The titles He assumes.* He calls Himself the Son of Man and the Only Begotten Son of God. The Son of Man—not the Son of Jew, Greek, or Roman. The Son of Man—the Ideal Man. The Son of God—the Only Begotten Son of God. A title, this, whose meaning we can never penetrate ; a relation whose import we can never fathom. Another thing indicative of His transcendent greatness is—

Thirdly : *The wonderful mission He claims.* He claims a mission from heaven :—"No man hath ascended up to heaven," &c. The meaning of this apparently paradoxical utterance is, that no man has got the truth by ascending to heaven ; He only has got it who came down from heaven, and whose home is in heaven, even the Son of Man himself. He claims a mission from God to save the world—"God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten son," &c.

Such are briefly some of the indications we have here of the transcendent greatness of this Teacher sent from God,

from whom Nicodemus was this night endeavoring to receive religious truth.

III. THE MOMENTOUS LESSONS WHICH WERE TAUGHT IN THE GOSPEL SCHOOL THIS NIGHT. What were the truths inculcated? They comprehend the two great cardinals of His system, which theology designates *regeneration* and *reconciliation*; in other words, a change in our moral character, and in our moral relations—a subjective and an objective change. The former is developed in the first eleven verses, and the latter in the succeeding six. These doctrines are not only similar, but may be regarded as identical. In relation to the points of similarity, we notice *both are indispensable*. Without change of character, there is no entering into the kingdom of God. Without change of relation, without reconciliation to God by faith in Christ, there is no life. Man requires both a nature for heaven, and a title to it. *Both involve the Divine interposition*; the one the agency of the Spirit, whose operations are as mysterious as the wind; the other the interposition of God's only Son. *Both require faith in Christ* as the messenger of God's love. This faith is essential both to regenerate and to reconcile.

But the two are so vitally connected, that it is scarcely philosophical to regard them apart. Certainly, Christ, in the passage, does not regard them as distinct, but treats them as one. The subjective change necessarily ensures the objective. Regeneration is reconciliation. The soul being made right in itself, is right with God, and He regards it as such. The truths which Christ taught this night will perhaps come better out by disregarding the classifications and terminologies of theological systems.

What, then, are the general truths which Christ taught Nicodemus this night?

First: *That there is a necessity for a radical moral change in man's character*. So thorough is the change, that Christ represents it as a new birth. The change is such a revolution in the governing disposition of the soul as involves a new life,

experience, and history. Without it there is no entrance into the "kingdom of God," the kingdom of spiritual truth, love, and blessedness. Christ intimates three things concerning this necessary change. (1) It requires the agency of the Divine Spirit, which is mysterious in its operations. It must be accomplished by "water and the Spirit," and that Spirit is as mysterious as the wind which "bloweth where it listeth," &c. (2) The non-understanding of it by believers in the Bible is a reprehensible matter. "Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?" Thou professest to believe in the Old Scriptures, which are full of it, &c. (3) The understanding of it is essential to the understanding of the higher aspects of Divine truth. "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not," &c. The earthly are those which come within the sphere of human consciousness;—the heavenly, those which refer to the wonderful history of Christ as the messenger of God's love. Another truth taught here is—

Secondly: *That the principle of eternal life, involved in this change, comes to man through the mission of Christ.* The new-born life in the soul may be said to consist in supreme love to God. This love gives a new experience, a new history to man. It is Eternal Life. It is everlasting blessedness in embryo. But it comes through Christ:—(1) Through looking at Him, as the believing Jew looked upon the brazen serpent in the wilderness. "As Moses lifted up," &c. (2) Believing on Him as the messenger of God's love. "Whosoever believeth in him," &c. This "eternal life," then, comes to the world through Christ. He who ascended to heaven, and came down from heaven, whose home is heaven, He brought this eternal life to the world. This was the object of His mission. "As thou hast given me power over all flesh, (mankind) that I should give to all flesh (mankind) that which thou hast given me—*Eternal Life.*" Another truth taught is—

Thirdly: *That the mission of Christ to the world is to be ascribed to the infinite love of the Father.* "God so loved the world." Here is an immeasurable ocean, whose depths no

intellect can fathom. "So loved," &c. Another truth taught is—

Fourthly : *That the world's treatment of this manifestation of infinite love determines its moral condition before God.* "He that believeth on him is not condemned, he that believeth not is condemned already," &c. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world," &c.

We have only given the bare outlines of the thoughts suggested by this passage. Every verse is a fertile text, and, on many of them, discourses have already appeared in the "Homilist."



SUBJECT :—*The Moral Battle.*

"Fight the good fight of faith."—1 Tim. vi. 12.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Thirty-second.

WE all know what fighting means. Within the last few years, we as Englishmen, as Europeans, as men, have had plenty of it—horror and bloodshed, death and suffering, agony and bitter woe in Italy, India and America.—So it is ever : "wars and rumours of wars in the earth."

And is it not true that all earthly things are types, shadows, teachers of heavenly things—things outward, patterns of things inward ? As there are ever wars and rumours of wars without, so ever in men's hearts there is war and fighting, victory and defeat.

Nay, not only thus is there an ever-waging fight in *each* man's breast : but there has been—if I may so say, and if you will receive it—there has been a great war ever since the foundation of the world : ever since Satan tempted and Adam fell ; ever through all the generations of men, there has been great war between God and the devil, good and evil :—God in men's hearts, the devil tempting and defiling men's hearts ; God with and for men, the devil to work men woe.

So too, you, each of you—yes, you, even you, are thus fighting on this side or on that. For ever, and for ever, in every single thought, in every single action, in every single word, you strike a blow that tells for good or for bad, for God or for the devil, in this ever-waging, ever-moving, ever-surging fight. Fight, then, the good fight of faith. Remember, all of you, you *are* fighting on *one* side : there is no middle ground. By baptism we were enlisted as soldiers of Christ, to fight under His banner, with His armor. Whether you are doing so or not, I cannot—I shall never be fully able, to tell ; whether you are or not, some perhaps may never have thought. But an earnest attention to the words soon to be spoken about the Christian's enemies will enable you, I think, to tell whether you are fighting on the right side or not. Do, at all events, remember that you are on the one side or the other. *This* you cannot escape.

Who, then, are the enemies the true Christian has to fight against ? Some of you may at once say—"The world, the flesh, and the devil." Yes, just so ; but if I add another question :—What do you mean by *world*, by *flesh*, or by *devil* ? I might perhaps not get quite so satisfactory an answer. Yet, surely, we cannot safely and truly fight with an enemy, if we do not really know who he is or whence he comes. Let us, then, try to get into our heads and hearts as clear a view as possible of our enemies.

What, then, does the word *WORLD* mean ? It *does not mean*, as some tell us, the world above, beneath, around us, that God has made with *His* sun, moon and stars—with *His* creating and preserving life breathing in and pervading all—not this, which he would not again curse. It *does not mean* the business, society, home pleasures, and kind affections of every-day life ; it does not mean the joys of childhood, or the sports of youth. It means none of these, nor aught like these—these are all the good gifts of God. What, then, is "the world ?" By the "world," then, I mean—those temptations either to commit actual sin, or to neglect positive duty, which come upon us from our position in life. Not those

which come right from one's own heart ; but those which come from the society in which we live ; the company which we keep ; the work, trade, or occupation we are engaged in. Temptations that come from outside, from friends, neighbours, schoolmates. So, then, the world of different men will be different—different according to station, company, profession, &c., *e. g.* for servant and master. The world, indeed, is not any of the things I just mentioned—God's natural or God's social world—for both are His, and therefore good. But yet, remember, that any or all of these things may yet be *our world* ; for the world then comes in, when in any of these things we find a temptation to commit sin, and neglect duty. *Home* is not world—but if anything about home tempts to sin, then it becomes world. So, society, school, playground, trade, work, are not in themselves world, but are then “world” when from them comes a temptation to sin.

But what is our second enemy, *the FLESH* ? It is not without reason that this is put second : for one can plainly see that any temptation from outside a man could move him but little, unless there was something *in him*, which led him to give way to the temptation. There must be something in us, or what is outside would come to us, and pass by us, without evil influence. This may be well illustrated by the loadstone and steel. This, then, in a man, which is acted on by temptations from without, is what we call the flesh. After a good deal of thought on this word, the plainest definition I can find of it is—*the bad* in man. And because there is bad in us, the bad from without, aye, and often what is of itself good, can draw us to sin. And do not we all know that there is bad in us ? Here comes the great test whether we are fighting the good fight of faith :—Do we, when the bad in us tempteth us to sin, resist ? If we do, we know what is meant by Christian fighting. There, in our hearts, is and must be the greatest struggle ; once beat the devil there, by God's help, and the victory elsewhere would be easy. The fiercest and hottest of the fight for us is here, in us, in our hearts ? Two voices, two men, so to say, are in us,

fighting, wrestling, struggling. If we are indeed fighting on God's side, indeed resisting the flesh, we shall feel this struggle. No Christian ever escaped it, none ever can. In our hearts we must fight, and often, with St. Paul, we shall exclaim, "What I would, that do I not; and what I would not, that I do." Beautifully this expresses the ever-continuing fight between a man, so to say, and himself; and this is the truest repentance; truer repentance than fears of hell, thousands of tears, and hosts of hasty impulses. Do you, then, thus fight with yourselves in yourselves? Who has not felt that there are two sides in his heart? Do you wilfully refuse to listen to the right, and always follow the "bad in you," the flesh—or is there a struggle in your hearts, and hearty praying to God for help in the struggle? Nay, let this be your motto, in all these inner struggles, these struggles in the heart—"I *will* fight the good fight."

But there is another enemy, "*the* DEVIL." Yes, the devil. "He goeth about as a roaring lion." Do we not say, when a man commits a suicide or a murder, "The devil was very near him," or "The devil was very strong with him." Yes, he is at work—he is our enemy—and with him our fight will be and is; not only with flesh and blood, but, as St. Paul expresses it, "with spiritual wickedness in high places." Poor Job, the patient man, had a hard and bitter fight with him thousands of years ago, and we, too, have this fight, in no mere metaphor, in no mere figure. As truly as we have the Spirit of God, even the Holy Ghost, with us, in us, and for us, so truly, I believe, we have to fight with the devil. This is a solemn thought, a thought for earnest minds, young and old, to think earnestly over. One of old argued with his friends by saying, "Lest haply ye be found fighting against God;" so when *we* are tempted to any sin, when we are tempted to give way, and, it may be, hazard some doubtful course, let us think that haply we may be going to do the devil's work, that the devil is tempting us, that we may haply be putting our hands to the devil's plough. The devil knows full well that, did we see or think that his hand set

the snare, we should shrink with terror and dread from taking the bait. But *do* let us think of this ; let us remember that, for aught we know, when we are inclined to do any sin, Satan, the enemy of God and man, may be that very moment getting our feet into his net.

Let us, then, ever fight earnestly against all temptations of all kinds ; let us be indeed soldiers of that cross on which our Saviour died to save us from sin. And under such a general, who gave Himself to die for all His men, can we desert our faith, and let that sin master us which caused *His* death ? Can there be anything that friends, or neighbours, society, or all the world can give us of such a value, so worth having, that we should for it desert Him who for us gave up Himself, the Lord of all ? Shall we allow what there is of *bad* in us to rise up in opposition to that blessed Spirit in and with us, given us by that same, our Captain ! Shall we not, every time evil tempers, unholy thoughts, selfish desires, spring up, shall we not pray and watch that we may for His sake, in His name, and by His help conquer that which, *in ourselves*, we know is not what it ought to be ? When some sudden temptation comes, when the devil takes us as he did our Lord, and offers us food, raiment, and such things freely if we will sin ; offers us show, honor, pride, if we will sin ; when he tempts us to presume on God's mercy, and expect God to save us where His word has never promised, and in such a way as He has never promised ; whenever, thus, the devil tempts us, let us still watch, and still pray, and still praying we shall still resist.

Fight then, thus, the good fight of faith, for it is even good. 'Tis good, for good, with the good. 'Tis God's fight, for God, with God. Fight in faith. In Christ is all ; and by Him, and in Him, we have all might, wisdom, strength, and victory.

F. H.



SUBJECT:—*The Paucity, Position, and Power of the True.*

“And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men.”—Micah v. 7.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Thirty-third.

THE truth in this verse may be said to have met with its partial fulfilment in the unique and marvellous experience of the Jews; for (1) they are but a “remnant” of the human family, being but a fragment, a fraction of the whole human race. (2) They dwell in “remnants,” in detached, broken, and fragmentary portions, “here a little and there a little.” (3) They dwell “in the midst of many people,” so that there is hardly a single nation or people in which there is not at present some small remnant of the Abrahamic seed. Both in the ancient and quiet East, and in the more restless and modern West, they are “in the midst of many people.” (4) They exist, and are preserved as a *witness* on the behalf of Heaven and its truth. (5) All this has been continued *irrespective of*, and, in many cases, *in opposition to*, the most earnest human effort, “tarrying not for man,” &c. But while the text may have a reference to the captivities, and, in later times, to the dispersion of “the seed of Israel,” still we think that there are suggested to us certain laws and principles which have both force and fulfilment in the history and experience of the Christian Church.

I. THE PAUCITY OF THE TRUE. God has ever had a people peculiarly His own; and who will dare dispute His right to have a more special regard to some, than He may have to others? Calvinian or Arminian, we all agree that “the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself;” the true from among the false, and the pure from amongst the vile. From the dawn of human history, these have been but a “remnant” of the human family. Look at the flood, and at Egypt. Even to-day, although eighteen hundred

years have rolled away since the Christian church was instituted amid the tears and blood of the Crucified, the elect race form but a "remnant." Can we dare hope that even *a twentieth* of the human family is "as a dew from the Lord, &c.?" And although the royal race be so few, they are not found together, but in small parcels or fragments. And when in any place they have sought to exist otherwise, an over-ruling providence has scattered them. See the early disciples at Jerusalem. Thus the holy and the true are but a "remnant" in nations, in towns and in families, for few are the families so blessed as was one of the Henries. Are we too uncharitable in saying, that not more than one in ten of our town populations can be fairly thought to be on the Lord's side?

II. THE POSITION OF THE TRUE. "In the midst, &c." It might be more in harmony with our own natural tastes and preferences, to be a separate people in one land swarming together, without any of the false about us, but such is not God's arrangement. Shiploads of Christians may leave our shores for some Canterbury or other settlement, where they may hope to live and not see the face of an unbeliever, but sadly do such men err in expecting this. Look at the Mormon delusion at the Salt Lake. If that hideous and loathsome system were true, God would long ere this, have driven from thence and scattered them. Should the whole Church but settle down *in one land*, it would be a most grievous curse and woe to the world. We are to settle down only in heaven. The distribution of the Church "in the midst, &c.," is necessary in order to promote the Divine purpose, for it exists not for itself alone, but as leaven in meal, as salt, as Divine seed, here a grain and there a grain. Learn this, that God hath placed you "in the midst" of your enemies, by *contact* to bless them, for each has his sphere. Christ was a stranger in the midst of strangers, as we are. The Church is the gold in the ore—the wheat in the heap, giving worth and weight to the mass.

III. THE PURPOSE OF THE TRUE. "As a dew, &c." The design of their dispersion has a vital relation to the people amongst whom they are placed, as the dew and showers to the grass. As the showers are of heavenly origin, so is Israel, "born from above." As the dew is a pure and crystal liquid, so the true Israel is composed of the choicest natures and sweetest spirits in the world. You may point me to colored drapery and conventional professors, but such are not heaven-made. Dew is silently produced, and so the mightiest work may be accomplished in the human soul, "without observation."

As the dew and showers are entirely independent of the human, "tarrieth not, &c.," so the Church, like the truth, lives not upon human sufferance. Our religious power and life may "tarry not" for the state, nor for political favor, By the grace of God, and that alone, the true are what they are. And by it we are to vivify, refresh and fructify, and so "fill the face of the world with fruit." *This purpose will be fulfilled.* Many weak and unbelieving minds have *thought* that the true, being but a "remnant," their influence would wane and die, but thank God this cannot be, for the source is unfailing and Divine. Some have *desired* its death. Others have *sought hard to extinguish it*, but they have battled with Omnipotence, and at last been ruined.

Others have been smitten, conquered, and saved by it. Are we in our social, commercial, or other spheres, "as a dew, &c.?" Some men who profess much, are "in the midst of many" ungodly "people," but not as dew, for they are *at home*, and one with their fellows. Such will not we be, Heaven helping us.

E. D. GREEN.

SUBJECT :—*The Creation Praising God.*

“Let the heaven and earth praise him, the seas, and every thing that moveth therein.”—Psalm lxxix. 34.

Analysis of Homily the Six Hundred and Thirty-fourth.

RIGHT views of God inspire right feelings towards Him ; they that know Him admire Him, love Him, confide in Him, and feel moved to employ themselves in extolling, magnifying, and praising His great and holy name. Such were the views and the emotions of the Psalmist. God appeared to him infinitely glorious, inconceivably excellent, and thoroughly lovely. In the presence and in the contemplation of such a wonderful assemblage of excellences, the Psalmist felt an irresistible inclination to magnify and praise Him in whom they inhered. Nor was he satisfied with praising Him himself ; He wanted the whole creation to unite with him in offering solemn and intelligent praise. He calls upon the heaven, earth, and seas, to engage themselves in praising their Maker : “Let the heaven and earth praise Him.” What is meant by praising God ? It is to speak well of Him—it is to utter forth the excellences and perfections of His nature—it is to thank Him for what He is in Himself—for what He is to us, for what He has done for us, and for what He has promised to do for us in time to come.

Praise is due to God, and the whole intelligent and holy creation will employ themselves in praising Him :—

I. ON ACCOUNT OF WHAT HE IS IN HIMSELF. The first question we put when we meet a man the first time is—what kind of a man is he ?—not physically, but mentally and morally. What are his governing principles, the leading propensities of his heart ? What is the nature of God ? What kind of a being is He ? God is good ; He is intrinsically excellent. His nature is composed of all possible perfections : “God is love”—wisdom, intelligence, goodness, truth, righteousness, and mercy. On account, therefore,

of what God is in Himself, the whole holy creation—and we, I trust, forming a part of it—will eternally praise Him.

II. ON ACCOUNT OF WHAT HE IS IN HIS RELATIONS. God, who is thus praised, stands closely related to the intelligent creatures who employ themselves in praising Him. To the whole, He stands in the relation of Creator, Sustainer, and Benefactor. It will be felt throughout eternity that, because God made us, sustained us, and conferred upon us such bounties, without limitations, He is entitled to our praise. To us, whom He has redeemed, by the sacrificial “death of His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ,” He stands in the relation of a *Father* and *Saviour*. The Church will feel that, because God thought fit to enter into this relation to them, He is worthy to be for ever praised.

III. ON ACCOUNT OF WHAT HE HAS ACCOMPLISHED. Men make themselves celebrated, renowned, talked of, and praised, by means of their works. The works of God excel the works of all others. They are—*Creation*,—“He made all things;”—*Providence*,—He cares for and governs all things;—*Redemption*,—it was God that raised apostate humanity from the ruins of the fall. No works can compete with these. And on their account God will be praised throughout eternity, by an intelligent and redeemed universe.

IV. ON ACCOUNT OF HIS WONDERFUL GIFTS. Men acquire honor, renown, praise, and thanksgiving, by their kind, generous, and liberal donations. God has given to them, and they give to their needy, destitute, and suffering brethren. No gifts are equal to those of God, no gifts are so abundant, so valuable, so free, and so uniform in their bestowment. What has God given? Life, reason, mind, subjects for thought, Jesus Christ, the Holy Bible, the ministry of reconciliation, the Holy Spirit, the comforts and consolations of religion, and a hope—resting firmly and securely upon the atonement of Calvary—of heaven, when this temporary introductory life shall have past away.

V. ON ACCOUNT OF HIS GRAND DISCOVERIES. Man builds a rightful claim to the admiration, praise, and gratitude of mankind, by the discoveries he makes, and the facts he brings to light. What has God made known? —That there is an eternal world; that men are immortal; that noble and abundant provisions have been made for our happiness during the ever-revolving cycles of an eternity to come; the way in which we, and all mankind, may be prepared for the full and unending fruition of the bliss He has prepared for us.

On these grounds, God is worthy to be praised; and we feel sure that the holy, intelligent, and saved creation, will always call upon their souls, and all that is within them, to bless and praise His great and holy name.

Reader! will you and I form a part of that happy throng which shall employ their eternity in hymning the praises of their Creator and Redeemer? The question is weighty. Seriously ponder it.

ISAAC EVANS.

Biblical Exegesis.

1 COR. I. 22—24.

ἐπειδὴ καὶ Ἰουδαῖοι σημεῖα αἰτοῦσι
καὶ Ἕλληνες σοφίαν ζητοῦσιν
ἡμεῖς δὲ κηρύσσομεν Χριστὸν ἐσταυρωμένον
Ἰουδαίοις μὲν σκάνδαλον
ἔθνεσι δὲ μωρίαν
αὐτοῖς δὲ τοῖς κλητοῖς Ἰουδαίοις τε καὶ Ἕλλησι
Χριστὸν
Θεοῦ δύναμιν
καὶ Θεοῦ σοφίαν.

IF we had room for the exhibition of the whole passage, from the 21st to the 31st verse, in the form which Moses Stuart names *stichometrical*, the reader would be much aided. That form of writing was the method of the ancient scribes, and

the more ancient the manuscript the shorter the lines. Some such method was doubtless used by the original writers, or at least was in their minds, as is manifest from the structure of their periods; and the use of the method by modern students will be found eminently helpful in their attempts to ascertain what that original structure was.

The reader will remember our remarks on the words *σημεῖον* and *ὄραμα* in the last number. They throw light on the passage now before us.

The *ἐπειδὴ καὶ* and *inasmuch as*, of verse 22, refers back to the *ἐπειδὴ γὰρ* for *inasmuch as*, of the verse before. There he spake of the Divine resolution to save by the preaching of what seemed foolishness, as a consequence of the world failing by *their* wisdom to come at the true Divine knowledge—the knowledge of God which can only be gained *ἐν τῇ σοφίᾳ τοῦ Θεοῦ*, an imparted wisdom which begins in the fear of the Lord. Here he speaks of apostolic preaching as a consequence of the same; but he descends to more particulars, specifying the Jews and the Greeks as having both failed of that Divine knowledge.

A Divine manifestation might justly be expected to be attended by *σημεῖα*, *marks*, of its reality and genuineness. The *asking for* signs is not, therefore, condemned absolutely. The Jews are blamed either because their *asking* was in excess, or because they wished to dictate what kind of signs should be afforded, instead of leaving the choice to God. The latter seems to be the apostle's intention. The Jews were scandalized at the crucifixion, which seemed to them to show a want of *power*. To *ask* was right, but they should not have dictated. The proverb runs, "Beggars must not be choosers." The fault of the Greeks was different; they *sought* after wisdom. A manifestation of wisdom might be expected as a part of a manifestation of God; but they, either ignorant that such a manifestation was possible or probable, or acting in arrogant independence, *sought* for themselves.

The shameful death of Jesus by the cross offended the Jews, who regarded it as a sign, not of power, but of *weakness*. The doctrine preached by the apostles of salvation through the Crucified One, was regarded by the Greeks, not as wisdom, but as *foolishness*. This false appearance of Christ and His doctrine was a consequence of their arrogance, worldliness, and worldly-wisdom. Christ and His doctrine appeared in an opposite light to *the called*. Let us now turn to these.

The verb *to call* belongs to the system of Bible words, and has an elevated and pregnant significance. A Divine *call* is a recognition of an individual person as such, and its object is to awaken his attention to a revelation which is to follow. Thus God called Abraham, Gen. xxii. 1, 11; and Samuel, 1 Sam. iii. Sometimes the revelation itself has the same name given to it. Thus Aaron was *called* to the priesthood, that is, there was a Divine utterance to the effect, Heb. v. 4, Exod. xxviii. 1—3. Christians are “partakers of the heavenly calling,” “made,” says Bengel, “by the Lord from heaven, and leading thither whence it was made.” This calling must involve a peculiar exercise of Divine power. It may be clothed in something outward, a voice miraculous or human, but its essence is an impression on the mind, making the person know that he is addrest, and that the speaker is God. It is necessary to remark, also, that when the apostle in the passage before us speaks of *the called*, he implies obedience; he speaks of such as have yielded themselves to the Divine manifestation.

Those, then, who yield themselves obediently to the Divine call, receive the fulness of the revelation. They perceive the *power* of God in Christ, and they perceive the *wisdom* of God in Christ; not power producing signs such as the Jews *asked*, nor wisdom such as the Greeks *sought*; but power and wisdom of a higher order; power which to Jews seemed weakness, wisdom which to Greeks seemed folly, but which to the obedient by faith appeared in their true character.

The *power* of God was manifested in raising Christ from the dead, (Rom. i. 4); and the same power wrought in Christians for their redemption (Ephes. i. 19—Rom. i. 16). The Holy Ghost, whose energy effected Christ’s resurrection from the grave, effects now the spiritual resurrection of the faithful. This becomes to them, and to the world, a greater *σημεῖον* of the presence and operation of the Divine *ἐνέργεια* than any external wonder. This explains John xiv. 12; since the transformation of the soul is a “greater work” than outward miracles. The outward signs were given at the first appearing of the Christ, but the internal work, the change from wickedness to righteousness, is a greater wonder, and a more convincing *sign* to the subjects of it and to the world in general. And *this* order of *signs* is permanent in the Christian economy.

Christ is essentially the Truth and the Wisdom of God:

(John xiv. 6) He is the Logos, first eternally to God Himself, then manifested in time to men (John i. 1, 14—Heb. i. 3). The glory of this wisdom is chiefly moral ; it deals among men with “righteousness, sanctification and redemption.” (verse 30).

Thus the two things which were wrongly *asked* by Jews, wrongly *sought* by Greeks, because asked and sought in arrogance and presumption, and therefore were hidden from them, are both seen in Christ by those who are obedient to the *calling*. There is Divine *power* which captivates their affections and transforms their character ; and there is Divine *wisdom* which fills and nourishes their minds.



The Christian Year.

BY A CLERGYMAN.

Christmas Day.

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”—John i. 14.

ST. JOHN the Evangelist was one of two brethren who received the surname of Sons of Thunder. As the sound of thunder rolling through the vault of heaven makes an unequalled impression of grandeur and sublimity, so the doctrine of St. John is a supernatural voice from heaven, and is eminently high and holy. As thunder is the manifestation of a universal, mighty, and mysterious energy, so the words of St. John reveal amongst us the unsuspected presence of a celestial Agent, and are the utterance of the Holy Ghost.

The Person who is *the Word* is also *the Only-begotten of the Father*. As the Son, He has the same being as the Father, and is God. The name of *Word* shows the manner of His generation, which is intellectual, as word is the offspring of mind. It shows also the eternity of the generation, for the mind's conceiving cannot be severed from the mind itself.

He was *in the beginning*—before creation—a Word to God, *in the bosom of the Father* (πρὸς τὸν Θεόν . . . εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς), a Word said in the eternal mind of God. Thus the two names, *Son* and *Word*, supplement each other, and complete the doctrine of His person; the one showing His real and substantial oneness with the Father, and the other the pure, and spiritual, and eternal character of His generation. The eternity of the Son is taught also in the Epistle to the Hebrews (i. 3), where He is called the *off-shining* or *radiance* (ἀπαύγασμα) of God's glory. A luminary cannot be thought of than as shining. As God is eternal, the Son, His radiance, is eternal also. So much for the Person of the Word.

Of this Person, it is here taught that He was *made flesh*. The term *flesh* in the diction of Scripture stands for *human nature*. The worser part is put for the whole. If the Word takes the worse, He will not leave the better; if the flesh, then certainly the soul. The term *flesh* is used because it is *impersonal*. He took not some particular man, not a human person, but human nature, that He Himself might become one of the race, and that all might thus have a share in Him.

He was *made flesh*, He was *born* (ἐγένετο). His object was to take another nature, and the way of nature is nativity. This was His generation in time. The Word was said to God by Himself in eternity; now in time the same Word is address by God to men. As we first indite a word in the mind before uttering it with the voice, so this Word was generated in eternity, and in time clothed and uttered in flesh.

How He was made flesh, we are told in the Epistle to the Hebrews (ii. 16.) “*He takes hold* (ἐπιλαμβάνεται) of the seed of Abraham.” He laid hold of it and appropriated it to Himself as a future dwelling and mode of existence. But in so appropriating this, it was necessary that He should *empty Himself*, which St Paul tells us He did (Phil. ii. 7, ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσε). In laying hold of our flesh, He laid aside His own

celestial majesty, yet without any essential change of Himself. Continuing the same *Person*, He took another *nature*.

Having been made flesh, He *dwelt among us*; did not appear for a moment and then vanish on a sudden, but abode for a while. Yet the word ἐσκήνωσεν, *pitched a tent*, expresses the *temporariness* of His sojourn. He dwelt not in a house but in a tabernacle, a mortal body like ours. He came on an errand, which done, He struck His tent. Some suppose that there is an allusion to the *military* character of His enterprise. Soldiers dwell in tents, and this our Captain Messiah (Dan. ix. 25) came into the camp and set up His pavilion among us in preparation for His combat with the enemy.

He is described as “full of *grace and truth*.” The Son is full of grace, the Word is full of truth. We were in need of grace as creatures and sinners; being in darkness and error we were in need of truth. Grace without truth were a tantalizing show, or at best an unsatisfactory indulgence. Truth without grace is cold, stern, and unattractive. It is well when they meet as they do in Christ. A little further on, grace and truth are placed in opposition to the law which was given by Moses. The law was severe and full of curses, the Gospel is merciful. The law was the shadow, Christ is the substance, the Very Priest, and the Very Victim.

He is “*full* of grace and truth. Others may have grace and truth, may even be “full” of them. So was St. John; so was St. Paul. But their fulness differs from His. Theirs was the fulness of a vessel, but His the fulness of the well, ever springing to fill the vessels, but never drawn dry.

The result of His coming in the flesh and sojourning was that *men beheld Him*. He did not hide, but showed Himself, and that to many, “*we beheld*.” The shepherds beheld Him; the wise men beheld Him; St. John and the rest of the disciples beheld Him. They beheld Him at their leisure, clearly and with consideration. The word expresses the beholding of spectators in a theatre (ἰθεασάμεθα). They saw and weighed well the spectacle of the acts and scenes of His

life. The history was unrolled before them as a panorama full of wonder and beauty. They beheld the glory of His power over nature when he changed water into wine, or stilled the storm; when he fed famishing multitudes, or healed the sick. They beheld the glory of His lordship over the unseen world when He raised the dead. In all these things they beheld the glory, especially, of His grace. They beheld the glory of His truth in His majesty when He was transfigured, and the Fatherly Voice spoke from the overshadowing cloud; when He rose from the sepulchre, and when He ascended to heaven. And this beholding of His glory by the witnesses is to us a proof of the reality of the incarnation.

On the witnesses, the beholding of His glory had a blessed effect. *Of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.* The contemplation of His perfection re-acted on themselves. He breathed on them His own influence. It was a gradual, cumulative process. Grace succeeded grace until all was consummated in glory. So it may be with us who receive their witness. By the energy of the Blessed Spirit the record of the witnesses proves the occasion of our receiving grace and truth, and if we are faithful to the end, will lead onward to the same glory. *Beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

The Incarnation of the Word assures us of *many blessings* :—

As it was the effect of His love to human nature, so *it is a pledge of His love continuing.* Our nature is now His own, and He must love it. The same may be said of the love of the Father, who sees His Son in our nature, and has exalted it to His own right hand.

As the Son is now one of us, *He is accessible.* We cannot be afraid of an innocent babe. We might tremble at a voice of thunder from a flaming mountain amid “blackness and darkness and tempest;” we cannot, at gentle human accents of One who converses among us in familiar life.

For the future of our nature the results of the incarnation must needs be stupendous. We are ready to believe in any consequences, however glorious, after this announcement. We can believe in the *regeneration* of the brethren of Christ; in the *glorious resurrection* of their bodies, and in their final *ascension to heaven*. The Son of God has become the Son of man, and the sons of men may hope to be made sons of God.

The Incarnation of the Word involves many duties :—

Purity of the body and of the mind. Let us not defile and dishonor by sensuality, and unclean imaginations, the nature which He has taken, but keep it pure as a fit habitation for God.

Imitative incarnation of the Word. Let us, in imitation of Him, incarnate the Word daily in our hearts and lives. This we may do, by turning the words of Scripture into works. This we shall do if our new-birth by His incarnation is to have a fitting result. Then the word with us will not remain a dead letter or empty wind, but will live and be clothed with flesh, so that it may be felt and seen *a living epistle of Christ*. And let this be not the passing vision of a moment, but the permanent document of a life. *Let the word not only be made flesh, but dwell in us.*

Recognition of our dependence on the Word made flesh. Let us, finally, in this reduction of word to work, recognize our dependence on the Word made flesh, as our model, and the source and sustainer of our new life. Grace and truth proceed from, Him still as of old by the channel of the Word written and preached, which is as it were the echo of Himself; and by the channel of the Sacrament, which is the figure of the nature which He assumed. Still, as of old, the Word is here in union with the flesh. Christ is more desirous of imparting Himself than we of receiving Him. If we partake of Him aright, and behold His glory here, though but dimly, the time will surely come when we shall see Him *face to face* as He now is, and undergo a readier, fuller, and endlessly progressive assimilation.

The Preacher's Finger-Post.

A NEW YEAR'S WISH.

"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth."—3 John i. 2.

THIS wish, the disciple, whom Jesus loved, expressed on behalf of his "well-beloved Gaius." In analyzing this wish we shall find in it the *secular interests of man, the spiritual interests of man, and the relation of one to the other.* In this wish—

I. THE SECULAR INTEREST OF MAN IS CONTEMPLATED.

"That thou mayest prosper and be in health." Two important secular things—*prosperity and health.* And we are glad to find such a spiritually-minded man as John recognizing their importance. First: *Physical health is important.* A fine-toned animal economy is of great importance to man intellectually, socially and spiritually. The intellect and heart alike work through the physical frame, and if the organ is disordered, their operations are more or less ineffective. A strong and healthy body is almost indispensable to a strong and healthy soul. It is religious

to recognize the importance of a good physical frame, and we are glad to find John doing so. Secondly: *Secular success is important.* "That thou mayest prosper." Man, because of his physical economy and relations, has necessarily to do with the secular, and secular failures are evils to be deprecated. Secular non-success is not only damaging to a man's own peace of mind, but to his moral temper, his social influence, and his philanthropic power. Wealth is a wonderful talent in this age. Now, so far as this idea in John's wish was concerned, he was a man of the world. He did that which is done at every festive board on nuptial anniversaries, birth-day feasts, and dawn of opening years. *Prosperity and health,* happy worldly circumstances, and a strong bodily frame. In this wish—

II. THE SPIRITUAL INTEREST OF MAN IS CONTEMPLATED.

"As thy soul prospereth." First: *John regarded Gaius as having a soul.* Inside of all the external surroundings of Gaius, and inside that bodily frame of his, he recognized a soul—a something,

though linked to, was essentially distinct from, all materialities. John's materialism did not cloud his vision of the spiritual. Secondly: *John regarded the soul of Gaius as needing prosperity.* There is such a thing as soul adversity, soul failures, and soul bankruptcies. No failure so tremendous as the failure of a soul. The failure of a great house of business sometimes impoverishes a number of families or a whole neighbourhood; but the failure of one soul may prove disastrous to millions for ever. But what is the prosperity of the soul? It is success in reaching higher thoughts of God and His universe, and greater fellowship of feeling with the "Father of an Infinite Majesty." In this wish—

III. THE RELATION OF THE SECULAR TO THE SPIRITUAL IS CONTEMPLATED. "That thou mayest prosper and be in health even as thy soul prospereth." First: The wish of John, universally realized, would prove *secularly ruinous to millions.* Suppose that men were only to have physical health according to their soul prosperity, what would be the result? Why, since the souls of men are confessedly morally diseased and dwarfish, instead of having men of robust physical frames treading our

marts of commerce, and the scenes of our professional undertakings, we should have a host of groaning skeletonic pigmies. Suppose that men were only to have secular prosperity according to the spiritual advancement of their souls, what a social revolution there would be effected. Palaces and mansions would be forsaken for huts, and, in many cases, the occupants of hovels would come up to the positions of wealth and power. Are you willing that I should wish this to you, this congregation? Are you willing that this wish should be realized? Were it realized, I fear that the physical beauty which some of you glory in, would depart in a moment; the physical strength of which you boast would go as the morning dew; your secular wealth take to itself wings and flee away. Secondly: The wish of John, universally realized, would put the *physical condition of the world in a right state.* Were this wish realized—(1) The material would be subordinate to the spiritual. Health and wealth would be used for the soul's interest. (2) The material would be symbolic of the spiritual. The spiritual condition of a man would be known by his physical frame and his worldly circumstances.

GOD AND THE GOOD.

"Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another : and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels ; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."—Malachi iii. 16, 17.

I. GOOD MEN IN THEIR RELATION TO GOD. First : *They reverence Him.* Malachi tells us that these old saints "feared the Lord." Not a slavish, but a filial fear, not a dread of His power, or His anger, but a holy awe of His majesty mingled with a loving admiration. Filial reverence lies at the basis of all true religion. Secondly : *They think upon Him.* "They thought upon His name." The name of God was His revealed character, His reputation. The intellect of the good is chiefly engaged in the contemplation of God as He is revealed in nature, history, the Bible, Christ. There is no higher theme of thought than this, not even for angels. Thirdly : *They talk about Him.* "They spake often one to another." The chief theme of thought will always be the leading subject of converse. "Out of the heart the mouth speaketh." Souls, though constitutionally social, can only meet and

mingle on a subject of common interest ; the loftier and purer the subject, the closer and more exquisite the communion. As the rays can only meet in the sun, so souls can only meet in true fellowship in the *name* of God. This is the platform of genuine social intercourse.

II. GOD IN RELATION TO GOOD MEN. First : *He hears their converse.* "The Lord hearkened and heard it." All sounds in the creation vibrate in the Divine ear ; the fall of the dewdrop as well as the thunder of the tempest ; the sighs of an infant as well as the choruses of eternity ; the oath of the blasphemer as well as the prayer of the saint. But he pays *special* attention to the words of the good. They travel to Him as the cries of the babe to the heart of the mother. Secondly : *He registers their history.* "A book of remembrance was written before him." He is represented as having recorded what He observes and hears. This book of remembrance before the Lord is no mere figure. The great universe is a book in which every sound uttered, every word spoken, are recorded. Science teaches that every syllable is printed imperishably in the surrounding air. Nature photographs not the mere

features of the face, nor the form of the body, but every changing look, every passing thought, every fleeting emotion, every movement, and every word. The great photographic plate of life will be exhibited one day, and we shall see the whole of ourselves. But whilst this is true of all, here is a special interest in all that is registered of the good. Thirdly : *He pledges their salvation.* "They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts." Salvation includes—(1) Glory in the future. He will treat them as His precious ones on the great "day when he shall make up his jewels." They are as precious as jewels to Him, and the value He sets on them He will reveal in *that day* when all His precious ones shall be made up. Such a day is to dawn. *That day!* (Matt. xxiv. 31.) Salvation includes—(2) Protection in the present. "I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." His providence shall guard them with all the carefulness of a father's heart. Brother, learn from this subject the *awful solemnity* of existence. Life is no jesting matter. All its pulsations are heard in heaven, all its history is registered in eternity. Learn, too, the only guarantee of a *blessed existence.* Goodness

is the only security. He only who reverences Him, thinks upon Him, converses about Him, will secure His loving regard, and be numbered at last amongst His *jewels*—His precious ones.



A STRANGER IN THE EARTH.

"I am a stranger in the earth."
—Ps. cxix. 19.

LET us look at this language in two aspects :—

I. As expressing a NECESSARY FACT in man's history. All men are strangers on the earth. The idea of stranger implies two things. First: *Ignorance.* The stranger in the neighbourhood, town, or country, is ignorant of a thousand things of which the natives are acquainted. How ignorant is man of this earth, of its physical history, its geological formation, its mineral resources, its vegetable productions, its animal systems, &c. The most intelligent man of science has scarcely read a leaf from the ponderous volume of facts which the world contains. We are strangers, we are only just come on it, and we have not time even to make ourselves acquainted with the acre or two of land which is the sphere of our daily activity.

The idea of stranger implies—
Secondly: *Unsettledness*. The inhabitant has settled down, has a house of his own. The stranger just uses the apartments, or his tent, for the hour and is gone. There is nothing settled here. We cultivate the fields, we occupy the houses, we fill the offices, we carry on the businesses of the men who came here a few years ago, spent a short time, and were gone for ever. Others are coming, and we must go—we are *strangers*. Let us look at this language:—

II. As expressing a VIRTUOUS FACT in man's earthly history. Whilst *all* men are strangers on the earth, there are but *few* men who *feel* and *act* in accordance with the fact. The millions feel as if they had settled down—as if the earth were their home. What are the feelings becoming a “stranger?” First: *A grateful recognition of present accommodations, as temporary things*. A stranger goes into a neighbourhood, and accepts the accommodation of the hour with a grateful spirit. He does not set his heart upon the objects about him. Whatever interest he feels in things, he keeps his affections disengaged and free. So it is with the godly; so it should be with

all. As we are “strangers” here — mere sojourners — passing on, and that with awful swiftness, it is madness to set our hearts on things that we are leaving. Use them for the hour, and thank God. Use the beauty that you see around you; use the power with which you may be invested; use the wealth which may come into your possession; use the pleasing influences that may thrill you for the hour, as things from which you are passing with a speed which no power can stop or check. Secondly: *A practical reference of present accommodation to his future destiny*. The stranger is constantly looking to the end of his journey, and often feels impatient to be gone. His home absorbs more of his thoughts and sympathies, than the magnificent cities through which he rolls, or the grand hotels in which he spends the night. So it should be with us. Our citizenship should “be in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour,” &c. Brothers, we are strangers. This is a fact, undeniable and necessary. Are we realizing it? acting according to it? and looking “for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God?”

THE GRAND FELLOWSHIP AND ASSIMILATION IN LIFE'S PATH.

"He that walketh with wise men shall be wise."—Prov. xiii. 20.

I. THE GRAND FELLOWSHIP IN LIFE'S PATH. Though *fools* crowd the path of life, there are many "wise men" here and there. Who are the wise men? First: *The men who aim at the highest end of existence.* What is the highest end? Not wealth, pleasure, fame, &c. These are mere bubbles viewed in the light of the greatness of man's nature, and the vastness of his relationships. The highest end of man, the only worthy end, is *eternal perfection of character*, spiritual assimilation to God's perfection. Who are the wise men? Secondly: *The men who employ the best means to reach that end.* What are the best means to secure this eternal perfection of being? Not external moralities, conventional religions, ritualistic observances. These have been tried over and over again, and have failed. The Gospel is the power. "Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord," &c. Who are the wise men? Thirdly: *The men who devote the best time in the employment of those means.* What is the best time? Not to-morrow; it is unwise to trust to-morrow, it may never

come. Now is that time. Who will say that this is not wisdom? Who will say that he has any claim to be regarded as a wise man whose life includes not these three things? Whatever genius, erudition, skill, he may have, if he neglect these things he is a fool.

II. THE GLORIOUS ASSIMILATION IN LIFE'S PATH. "Shall be wise." First: *There is a transforming power in the ideas of the truly wise.* The ideas of wise and godly men are the greatest spiritual forces of the world. The ideas of other men, even in their highest aspect, are cold, dim, and dead, as the beams of the moon. The ideas of "wise men" are like the rays of the sun; warm, bright, touching all into life. In the Bible you have these ideas in their mightiest form. Patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and the great SON OF MAN Himself, were their organs. Thank God there are men who speak with their tongues and their pens, even now, and with these men you may walk. Secondly: *There is a transforming power in the sympathies of the truly wise.* Sympathy is a mighty power. Even a touch of it in the dropping tear, the faltering voice, the quivering lip, will often move a soul to its centre. The sympathies

of the wise man are deep, spiritual, genuine, Christ-like. They are morally electric. Thirdly: *There is a transforming power in the example of the truly wise.* All moral character is formed on the principle of imitation; hence the moral likeness of the child to the parent, the citizen to his nation. But we imitate only what we love and admire; and the character of the wise man has in it what alone can command the highest love and admiration of the soul. It has moral beauty—the beauty of the Lord.

From this subject we learn—First: *That the choice of companions is the most important step in life.* We are social, we must have companions; these must be either fools or wise, sinners or saints. If we choose fools, we shall be fools; wise, we shall be wise; and they that shall be wise shall shine as the stars. Secondly: *That godly literature has an inestimable value.* By godly literature I am far enough from meaning all the books that are called religious. Many of the so-called religious books, on account of the feebleness of their conceptions, the sickliness of their sentiments, the exclusiveness of their spirit, the flippancy, the coarseness, the

irreverence in which they treat the most momentous subjects, are, of all books, the most to be contemned and avoided. By godly books I mean books that treat the great questions of duty and destiny, not only with the highest ability, but with a spirit of Divine reverence and devotion. Thirdly: *That the Church institution is a most beneficent appointment.* The true Church is an assemblage of wise men. This is the ideal. Hence it is ordained as the organ of heaven's transforming power; thither the world is to resort to become wise and good. Would that what is called the Church were indeed the Church; but, in many cases, what is called the Church is an assemblage of what?—not wise men.

THE TRUE WARFARE.

“To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.”—Rev. ii. 7.

I. EVERY Christian is a soldier. He has enemies to contend with; battles to fight; victories to win. As a soldier he has (1) a Captain. (Heb. ii. 10). It is important that the Captain be efficient. No matter how brave the soldiery, if the plans are ill laid, &c., defeat must follow.

The Christian's Captain is *perfect*. (2) *Enemies*. The world; i. e. the people of the world who are opposed to Him in spirit and in practice; the *flesh*, the "natural man," the corruption and tendency to ill that is entailed upon every son and daughter of Adam. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh;" the *devil*. The same that afflicted Job, tempted the Saviour, and buffeted the Apostle, and who still "goeth about like a roaring lion." Surely he "should not sleep as do others." (3) He is in *actual conflict*. It is the time of *war*, not peace. His enemies are in battle array; they know nothing of winter-quarters. He will be able to say, "I have *fought* a good fight," when he can add, "I have *finished* my course," not before.

II. Every Christian must be a *conqueror*. I argue this from the fact: (1) That his enemies will never yield. They must be subdued, or they will have the mastery. They must be made *slaves* or they will be *tyrants*. (2) His armor is adapted for enabling him to *face* the foe, not for securing a safe retreat. (3) That it is to the victor alone that the reward is promised. "Then shall the King say to those on his right hand,

Come," &c. "Him that overcometh." All are to be rewarded, then all must overcome.

III. That the victorious Christian will be rewarded. (1) He will be *honored*. "I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." (Chap. iii. 5.) (2) He will have *privileges*. "I will be his God, and he shall be my son." (xxi. 7.) "He shall not be hurt of the second death." (ii. 11.) (3) *Dignity*. "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God," &c. (iii. 12.) "I will write upon him my new name." "To him will I give power over all nations." (ii. 26.) (4) *Wealth*. "He shall inherit all things." "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne." (iii. 21.)

IV. That he will long enjoy his reward. Many warriors die on the battle-field; others have died ere the news of their elevation has reached them; with all, the toil and strife continues long, and the time of repose is comparatively short. Not so, however, with the Christian. It is a *day* of fighting, an *eternity* of repose, for he shall "eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

R. G.

THE SPIRITUAL PRESENCE OF
THE COMFORTER BETTER THAN
THE BODILY PRESENCE OF THE
SAVIOUR.

"It is expedient for you that I go away : for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you."
—John xvi. 7.

To treat this subject rightly, we must remember that the work performed by any Person in the Trinity is, in some sense, peculiarly suited to that person ; that there must be some fitness in a certain work to be done by the Father, or the Son, or the Spirit ; that there are good reasons why the Son, rather than the Father or the Spirit, should be Redeemer ; the Spirit, Sanctifier, &c. We must notice, further, that the text assumes that had Christ remained on earth, it would have been to do only such works as He had been performing while on earth, and *that* after the great purpose for which He came had been accomplished. Remembering these things, we can understand the following reasons for the assertion made in the text.

I. THE MANIFESTATION OF GOD DWELLING IN US BY HIS SPIRIT IS BETTER THAN THE MANIFESTATION OF HIMSELF IN BODILY PRESENCE. (xiv. 21, 23.) First : We shall have more just conceptions of God.

No one in whom the Spirit of God dwells is ever heard to pray, "Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us." (xiv. 8, 9.) Secondly : The presence of God through the Spirit is more close and intimate, more *real* than when He is *among* us simply. (xiv. 23.)

II. THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT IN THE HEART IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE WORKS OF CHRIST, SUCH AS HE PERFORMED ON EARTH. "Greater works than these" shall be done even by disciples when endowed with the Holy Spirit.

III. THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL WILL BE BETTER ASSURED TO US BY THE TESTIMONY OF THE SPIRIT THAN BY THE WORKING OF MIRACLES. No external testimony can so thoroughly assure us of the truth of our religion, as the conviction wrought in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

IV. WE SHALL GAIN A CLEARER KNOWLEDGE OF TRUTH AND BETTER FEEL ITS POWER BY THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF THE SPIRIT THAN BY THE ORAL TEACHING EVEN OF JESUS.

V. THE UNIVERSAL PRESENCE OF THE SPIRIT IS BETTER THAN THE LOCAL PRESENCE OF THE SAVIOUR.

To sum up, we may say

that the presence of the Holy Spirit for ever, is better than the continued presence of Christ among us ; because— First : His work is more important. Secondly : He has a better sphere of action, direct contact with the heart and conscience. Thirdly : His influence is more widely extended.

CONCLUSION. First : If the Holy Spirit dwell in us, all

real blessing will be ours. He will do all that is involved in the renewing of the heart. Secondly : If men, in this day of spiritual influence, believe not "Moses and the prophets," they would certainly not believe, "though one rose from the dead." Thirdly : Has this subject any teaching with regard to the future reign of Christ on earth ?

J. F.

The Pulpit and its Handmaids.

SACRIFICE.

The origin of sacrifice must be looked for in Scripture alone. No human conjecture has yet satisfactorily accounted for the first offering either of animals or fruit to an invisible Deity.

The shepherd or the husbandman might give a portion of his produce to his friend or master, in hospitality or homage ; but those gifts were to visible beings, and visibly accepted. With an invisible being, the connexion between the giver and the receiver is totally intercepted. If the senses are to be the standard, the offering in all instances must seem to be repelled. For what other conclusion is to be drawn by the senses. If they are to wait for a visible acceptance by the Deity, the fruits must wither, and the fatling corrupt on the altar, and there they must wait for ever. It is true that this impression respects only the early state of

worship. When a priesthood was once recognized, there was a visible object, and offerings for the service of the temple might become an intelligible form of gratitude, to its invisible Lord. But in the first instance, sacrifice could have been rationally offered only in obedience to a Divine authority.

* * * *

The arguments which have been so often urged against the atonement in after times, are too congenial to a presumptuous spirit to have escaped the willing sceptic in any age of the world :—The deficiency of all natural connection between the acquittal of guilt and the sufferings of a creature incapable of crime ; the contrast between the purification of the heart, and the shedding of blood ; or if sacrifice must be offered to a beneficent Deity, the inferior suitableness of flesh and blood to the produce of the ground, the

rich, useful, and innocent work of His own rain and sunshine, involving neither pollution nor pain.

To these objections no reply could be made, then or now, but that such was the command. The offering of animal sacrifice is evidently not the result of any natural process of the mind; and if a further revelation had not discovered its object to man, the connexion of this apparent waste of unresisting life, with the acquittal of crime, must have remained among the most inscrutable mysteries of religion.

But the true bearing of the argument is, that a rite directly repulsive, costly, and painful—which yet was practised from the beginning by all nations, and most habitually and solemnly by the nation chosen to preserve the true idea of the Divine being, and most scrupulously by the wisest, most virtuous, and most Divinely-favored of that nation—must have had its origin in some source above human invention. DR. CROLY.

ORIGINAL SIMILITUDES.

The Perfection of the Christian Character in the Future.

Judge not Christianity, even by its most perfect embodiment, in the life of its disciples here. The best are imperfect, and Christianity itself teaches this, and points to perfection as yonder. Do not judge the science of that organ-builder by that half-finished instrument in his workshop. There is but little in that to please the eye, and from it scarce a note can be evolved to charm the ear. Judge not the artistic character of that painter by the first rough outline which you discover on the canvas in his studio. There is scarcely a touch of life in it, or any perceptible resemblance to

the original. Judge the organ-builder by the instrument as it stands in the great cathedral, pouring forth, by the touch of a master-musician, pealing strains of music, electrifying the congregated thousands. Judge the artist by the picture as hung up in the Academy of Art—looking, throbbing, and blushing at you as a thing of life, gathering around it a crowd of admiring spectators. Even so judge Christianity. Its organ—the Christian life—is not half-finished here in its workshop. Yonder, in the great cathedral of eternity, you will see it in perfection, and feel the inspirations of its harmonies. The painting is not finished here in its studio; its figure is half-formed, and blotched, and scarcely a feature is accurate. See it in the great gallery of the heavens, finished, and an exact copy of the Son of God Himself, “Who is the image of the Father’s glory,” &c.

A PREPARATION OF HEART FOR THE GOSPEL.

I have somewhere read of a seed that is borne by the wind on its downy wings from spot to spot, and never shoots out its roots until it reaches a congenial soil. When it alights on the soil which suits it not, it shuts itself up, and sometimes sleeps for centuries—sleeps until some propitious gale will bear it to a congenial resting-place, and there, after a number of ages, it will grow, and multiply its kind indefinitely. It is somewhat thus with Christianity. During the long middle ages, the heavenly seed borne to the western world, remained dead upon the Papal soil. A breeze sprung up, and wafted it to a soil where it took root, and grew, and has been growing ever since. It has been borne into every heart in Christendom; but in the majority of cases,

the soil is unpropitious and the seed remains dead. We invoke no wind to bear it elsewhere, but we pray for an alteration in the soil.

DIVERSITIES OF POPULARITY.

The only popularity worth aspiring after is a peaceful popularity—the popularity of the heart—the popularity that is won in the bosom of families, and at the side of death-beds. There is another, a high and far-sounding popularity, which is indeed a most worthless article; felt, by all who have it most, to be greatly more oppressive than gratifying; a popularity of stare, and pressure, and animal

heat, and a whole tribe of other annoyances which it brings around the person of its unfortunate victim; a popularity which rifles home of its sweets, and by elevating a man above his fellows, places him in a region of desolation, where the intimacies of human fellowship are unfelt, and where he stands a conspicuous mark for the shafts of malice, and envy, and detraction: a popularity, which, with its head among thorns, and its feet on the treacherous quicksands, has nothing to lull the agonies of its tottering existence but the hosannahs of a drivelling generation.

CHALMERS.

Theological Notes and Queries.

OPEN COUNCIL.

[The utmost freedom of honest thought is permitted in this department. The reader must therefore use his own discriminating faculties, and the Editor must be allowed to claim freedom from responsibility.]

THE WEARING OUT OF THE BODY.

REPLICANT. In answer to QUERIST No. 14, p. 297. Simply by saying that he is no longer able to carry on the process of getting rid of the old and acquiring new particles. It is not the particles that are worn out—they are indestructible—it is the vital force which is expended. It was not constituted to maintain its energy for more than a limited period, and is now unable to keep the organization together any longer. This, however, is a question which, as metaphysical, is beyond the province of the theologian. Willing as we are to oblige everybody, we cannot undertake to solve

problems concerning things in every sphere of thought and existence.

WAR AND SLAVERY.

REPLICANT. In answer to QUERIST No. 15, p. 297. Neither is condemned by the letter, both by the spirit of the Bible. To ask which is condemned the most is the same as asking which is the greater injustice, to deprive a man of freedom or to take his life. Aggressive war, which is the thing in question, is but murder on the large scale.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

REPLICANT. In answer to QUERIST No. 16, p. 297. The practice of

the primitive Church. It was very early observed as the birthday of our Lord. Chrysostom, in the fourth century, clearly bears witness to the tradition of the day. (See his Works, Vol. v. p. 467.) Dr. Jarvis has carefully investigated this matter, bringing to bear upon it the lights of modern chronological science, and is considered to have demonstrated the correctness of Dec. 25 as the day on which Jesus was born. See "Jarvis's Chronological Introduction to the History of the Church."

Queries to be answered.

17.—Is the observance of Holy-days in harmony with the teaching of the New Testament?—J.C.

18.—Who is the best modern commentator on the Greek Testament?—DEVONIENSIS.

19.—We often hear preachers telling their hearers that man by *nature* is *sinful* and *unholy*. Now, is that true? Man was created in the image of God, pure and spotless; is not that his *natural* state? and is it not a perversion of language to say that his *natural* state is one of *sin*?—W. G. BLATCH.

20.—Will you kindly favor me with John McLeod Campbell's Theory of the Atonement?

INQUIRER.

21.—What are we to understand by the following—"The evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house." T. N.

Literary Notices.

[We hold it to be the duty of an Editor either to give an early notice of the books sent to him for remark, or to return them at once to the Publisher. It is unjust to praise worthless books; it is robbery to retain unnoticed ones.]

THE REVIEWER'S CANON.

In every work regard the author's end,
Since none can compass more than they intend.

A CRITICAL AND EXEGETICAL COMMENTARY OF THE BOOK OF GENESIS.

By JAMES G. MURPHY, LL.D., T.C.D. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 38, George Street. London: Hamilton, Adams & Co.

THE interest attached to the First Book of the Pentateuch can scarcely be exaggerated. It contains the records of the present condition of the earth, and of the human race, from its origin until the time of Moses; it deals with the fundamental questions of physics, philology, ethics and theology. To it we look as the great fountain of all earthly history. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Genesis, conducted

by one not only acquainted with the original language, but well versed in all cosmological theories, geological speculations, and rationalistic interpretations, will be welcomed by many a Biblical student. Such is the Commentary before us. The translation which the author has furnished of this book brings out a few fresh thoughts, and makes many old ones, which in our present version, appear in mist, lie in sunshine. We are pleased to find that the author has such a high appreciation of the purity and accuracy of the authorized version as a whole, and that his translation in most cases consists in the substitution, here and there, of words more true to the original. His introduction to the Commentary, presenting the contents, subject, structure, style, author of the book, and the true canons by which it should be interpreted, is highly valuable, and is decidedly the best introduction to the book we have ever seen; clear, concise, satisfactory. Such is the author's power of philosophical analysis and faculty of seeing into the heart of a subject, that we are often delighted at the number of ideas which he brings out of a text—ideas naturally there, but undiscovered by men of obtuser vision. We heartily commend the book.

THE GOSPEL HISTORY; a Compendium of Critical Investigations in support of the Historical Character of the Four Gospels. By Dr. J. H. H. EBRARD. Translated by JAMES MARTIN, B.A. Revised by ALEXANDER B. BRUCE, Cardross. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 38, George Street. London: Hamilton, Adams & Co.

THE author of this work is extensively known in this country by his commentaries on the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the Epistles of John. It is a vindication of the New Testament history against the attacks of rationalistic theology. Although the author had in his mind, in producing the book chiefly, if not entirely, a defence against the phases of German theology, much of the scepticism imported into our modern English theological literature is little else than a reproduction of cast-off criticism of Germany—hence his work has a mission in this country. We shall give our readers his method in his own words:—"We shall seek, first of all, to settle the question in the case of each Evangelist, whether the arrangement he adopted was based upon chronological sequence, or upon some topical classification. To this end we shall look first at the form in which the Gospels are written, and secondly, at their contents. The latter will require a careful description of the various incidents, a comparison of the synoptical accounts, and a notice of the objections of negative critics. We shall not commence, however, with a refutation of individual objections but with a positive statement of the case as it actually stands, which shall contain within itself a reply to all objections. In every instance, therefore, we shall begin with the *facts*

themselves, as gathered from an examination of the different narratives; and then, in support of the results obtained, adduce both psychological and exegetical proofs that, assuming the fact to have occurred, it was possible for the different accounts—M, “M,” “M,” to be written *without any one of them containing an error*.

This work has passed through two editions in Germany, and this translation, we are informed, is from the second edition, and consequently presents the author's more matured judgment on the subject of which he treats. It is one of the works which a student must have on his shelf.

THE IMPERIAL DICTIONARY OF UNIVERSAL BIOGRAPHY. By Writers of eminence in the various branches of Literature, Science, and Art. Vol V., LEE—ZWI. London, Glasgow, and Edinburgh: William Mackenzie.

THIS Fifth Volume completes this magnificent work, a work which consists of a concise memoir of the most distinguished men of all times and lands. The study of the biography of such men is necessary to interpret the great epochs of history, and to keep up our faith in the dignity of human nature in an age when men, for the most part, range from dwarfs to mediocrities. He who has these volumes in his library has the great men of all ages by his side, ready to speak to him at any moment, on any question in science, literature, art, and religion. Mr. Mackenzie, the spirited publisher, has imposed a lasting obligation upon English readers, in providing for them such stores of information, at a cost that places them within the reach of most. The numerous portrait-engravings which adorn each volume are amongst the finest we have ever seen. In them we almost have the men themselves—their countenances seem to radiate with their inspirations. We finally recommend, with earnestness, this work, which we have before repeatedly characterized and honestly praised.

THE WISDOM OF OUR FATHERS. Selections from the Miscellaneous Works of ARCHBISHOP LEIGHTON; with a Memoir. London: Religious Tract Society.

MOST Biblical students are acquainted with Archbishop Leighton's Commentary on the First Epistle of Peter, a work which stands amongst the sacred classics of our literature. The other works of the author are but little known, and this volume, therefore, which is a judicious selection from his miscellaneous productions, will be welcomed by many as a boon. The celebrated Bishop Burnet thus describes the author: “He had the greatest elevation of soul, the largest compass of knowledge,

the most mortified and heavenly disposition I ever yet saw in mortal ; he had the greatest parts as well as virtue, with the most perfect humility that I ever saw in man ; and had a sublime strain in preaching, with so grave a gesture, and such a majesty both of thought, of language, and of pronunciation, that I never once saw a wandering eye when he preached, and have seen whole assemblies often melt into tears before him ; and of whom I can say with truth, that in a full and frequent conversation with him, for about two and twenty years, I never knew him say an idle word that had not a direct tendency to edification, and I never once saw him in any other temper but that which I wished to be in in the last moments of my life." This is a high testimony, but it is the testimony of a witness in every way competent. The thoughts of a man thus estimated are of rare worth, and you find many of them in this volume.

THE ANNALS OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE. By CHRISTOPHER ANDERSON.

A new and revised edition, edited by his Nephew, HUGH ANDERSON.

London : Jackson, Walford & Hodder, 18, St. Paul's Churchyard.

NEXT in importance to the Bible itself is its history. The work before us is the only one which gives, in a systematic way, such a history. It contains the historic annals of the English Bible. We have in it a narrative of its first introduction into England, Scotland, and America—its earliest triumphs and its progress down to the present day. Such a narrative necessarily brings into view some of the greatest men, and the most stirring events of modern Europe. Hence this volume is crowded with information most choice in its character and thrilling in its force. These Annals of the English Bible furnish evidence amounting almost to demonstration in favour of the Divinity of "The Book." The wonderful manner in which it has been preserved intact amongst the hostility of its enemies, and the unfaithfulness of its professed friends ; the beneficent institutions which it has created and nurtured in Europe, and the sanitary influence it has exerted on every department of action, every grade of society, and every relation in life, declare it to be indeed the Word of God. This work, which displays on the part of the author great historic research, and a spirit of catholicity and religious reverence, supplies an undoubted desideratum.

THE NECESSARY EXISTENCE OF GOD. By WILLIAM HONGMAN GIL-

LESPIE, Esq. Fourth Edition. London : Houlston & Wright.

Edinburgh : William P. Nimmo.

BELIEVING as we thoroughly do that Atheism is not a thing of logic, and that, therefore, logic has no power to destroy it, we are not likely to

overrate the value of works of this kind. Mr. Gillespie's work, however, is undoubtedly, as we intimated in our pages some years ago, the best of the class. Indeed, we think it has no equal; if it fail to carry conviction to the heart of an atheist, it will scarcely fail to make jargon of his reasoning, quicken his intellect, and humble his pride in his endeavor to follow its profound ratiocinations.

NOTES ON THE GOSPELS, CRITICAL AND EXPLANATORY. By MELANCTHON W. JACOBUS. Mark and Luke. Edinburgh: William Oliphant & Co. London: Hamilton, Adams & Co.

SOMETIME ago, we called the attention of our readers to the author's "Notes on the Gospel of St. Matthew." We are pleased to receive his notes on two other of the Gospels. The peculiarity of his commentary is the incorporating the harmony with the notes. Thus each heading brings to view the subject of the section, the place of its occurrence, the order in the harmony, and the parallel passages in the other Evangelists. The work is mainly intended for Sabbath School Teachers, but the Christian Minister would find it of service to him in many ways. The interpretations are generally satisfactory, although his theologizings are rather too many, and in some cases too narrow for our taste.

LIFE; ITS NATURE, VARIETIES, AND PHENOMENA. By LEO H. GRINDON. Third Edition. London: F. Pitman, 20, Paternoster Row.

THE subject of this book—*Life*, is ever the most affluent in thought, and powerful in interest. In fact, the subject touches all things, matter and mind, the finite and the infinite. The author feels the grandeur of this theme, it rouses his strong intellect to vigorous action, and his imagination to poetic flights. The author belongs to the highest type of thinkers, and in his pen there is a power to chain the reader to his thoughts. The author's reading on the subject is remarkably extensive and varied, and the power of his strong imagination to illustrate his subject, is therefore greatly enriched by his extensive information. Young men, get the work—and study it. It is worth a thousand of ordinary books.

FROM THE WORLD TO THE PULPIT. London: William Freeman, 102, Fleet Street.

THIS work deals chiefly with theological colleges belonging to Non-conformists. The author, in a lively and interesting way, sketches the history of one, his *Alma Mater*, as an example of all. Though he

evidently feels their defects, there is far more of the generous man than the cynic in his strictures. We should have been pleased had the author made a more thorough revelation of the evils, and propounded a remedy. This must be done soon. This the author is evidently competent to accomplish, and if he had done so in his book, it would have made his production a work for the age. The work, as it is, is very interesting; there is a great deal of judicious remark, a good dash of wit and humour, with many telling incidents. The writer displays the attributes of a first-class author.

THE LIFE OF ADAM CLARKE, LL.D. By Rev. SAMUEL DUNN. London: William Tegg.

SEVERAL memoirs of Dr. Adam Clarke have long been before the public. Most of them, however, are too voluminous and expensive for the general public, and some of them are out of print. This small volume, therefore, comprehensive, truthful, cheap, and popularly written, will be welcomed by thousands who admire one of the greatest ornaments not only of Methodism, but of the Universal Church.

RIVERS OF WATER IN A DRY PLACE. An Account of Mr. MOFFAT'S Missionary Labours. Designed for the Young. London: Religious Tract Society.

ANYTHING about Moffat, who, taken as a whole, was the noblest man that ever entered the missionary field, will be hailed by multitudes in this country who have yet a vivid remembrance of his majestic presence, his divine brow, his thrilling speeches, containing incidents unrivalled by romance in interest, uttered by the voice of music, toned with a touching wail of sympathy for the heathen.

THE NEW SUNDAY SCHOOL HYMN BOOK. Edited by EDWIN HODDER. London: Jackson, Walford & Hodder, 27, Paternoster Row.

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